

## Silence is Golden – Prologue

The song *Silence is Golden* was released as the b side of *Rag Doll* by the Four Seasons. It was later recorded by an English group, The Tremeloes, and did even better than the Four Seasons release. Regardless, it is good advice those of us with a preppers mindset.

It even goes beyond the title with the second stanza of, *but my eyes still see*. Until and unless someone is stupid enough to attempt a first strike on the US, all preppers need to be mindful of their operating environment...soldiers and others call it situational awareness. Read a paper you trust, online if you must. Keep an eye on cable TV news channels; you'll have no trouble sorting the chaff from the wheat.

*Silence is Golden*

*Oh don't it hurt deep inside  
To see someone do something to her  
Oh don't it pain to see someone cry  
How especially if that someone is her*

*Silence is golden, but my eyes still see  
Silence is golden, golden, but my eyes still see*

*Talking is cheap people follow like sheep  
Even though there is nowhere to go  
How could she tell he deceived her so well  
Pity she'll be the last one to know*

*How many times will she fall for his lines  
Should I tell her or should I be cool  
And if I tried I know she'd say I lied  
Mind your business don't hurt her you fool*

*Silence is golden, but my eyes still see  
Silence is golden, golden, but my eyes still see*

A second point to the story is that money isn't the root of all evil; the love of money is the root of all evil. Being rich isn't a bad thing, depending on how you use your money. Some people marry into money, either his or hers. It can be most uncomfortable for Joe or Jane average to marry Joe or Jane rich. Finally, life isn't fair or unfair, it's just life. In this tale, Joe average marries Jane rich and mankind and Nature conspire against them.

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 1

I didn't hold with the M1A being the best rifle or the M1911 the best pistol. Good, yes, great, sure; but the best is what a person can afford. The most rifle I could afford in 7.62x51mm NATO caliber was the DSA STG-58 Austrian FAL with the type II receiver and carrying handle. The Glock 21 in .45acp was the same caliber but had adjustable sights for less money than some. As far as that went, it was safer than any 1911 design around. The safety and adjustable sights tipped the balance from the Taurus PT1911 to the Glock 21. However, one thing that didn't change was the shotgun. Mossberg had expanded their line of 590 models and I got the perfect pump for me, the 590A1 SPX with speed stock, aftermarket sidesaddle and elastic buttstock shell holder.

I had to wonder about the calibers, though. It was much easier to find 5.56x45mm ammo cheaper. The same applied to 9mm pistol ammo. Both were now the NATO standards. Why the .308 NATO and the old American .45acp? The answer laid in history, the Moro Rebellion and WW I & WW II. Americans had to resort to using .45 Colts when the .38 Special (a 9mm cartridge) wouldn't stop the Moro's. The .30-06 was the standard cartridge in both World Wars for US forces. Replaced by 7.62x51mm after the Korean War, the M14 rifle had a short career as the primary rifle of US armed forces, but was still in use over 50 years later.

The civilian version of the M14 was the M1A by Springfield Armory or various M14s offered by other builders, like Fulton and Smith. It really boiled down to cost. For what a Loaded M1A would run and the cost of 20 CMI 20 round magazines, I could get the STG-58, the magazines and two cases of military surplus.

By watching sales and offerings at various web sites, I got the ammo I wanted, 12 gauge in slugs, 00 buck and #4 buck. Forty-five ACP in 230gr FMJ and hollow point. I had a Ruger 10/22 from my childhood and added some of those extended magazines and three cases of .22LR ammo, the first in 40gr solid, the second in 36gr hollow point and the third in 33gr Yellow Jacket. I planned on a fourth case also in 40gr solid.

My old Winchester model 94 .30-30 showed the dings of hard use although it was as mechanically solid as the day Dad gave it to me. I had ten boxes each of the 150gr and 170gr cartridges. My shopping list included more of the .308 NATO and other calibers when I had the money.

I'd been into preparedness for about four years, give or take. Since I had the .22 and the .30-30, my first money went for LTS food supplies. I looked at Emergency Essentials and Walton Feed. Walton Feed was cheaper but you had to be patient, EE shipped faster. So, I sent off a cashier's check after they told me the cost of the one year deluxe supply plus shipping. Next, I waited and waited. During the wait, I spent most of my free time in the basement turning approximately one fourth of the floor space into a bomb/storm shelter.

Living in Arizona and working construction, I was pretty much employed year round. My construction skills also came in very handy when I put together the shelter. The problem, from my point of view, was the 8' basement ceiling. I rented a jackhammer and chiseled out one fourth of the basement floor. After hauling the concrete off, I dug down 4 feet below the floor level. With that done, I had a 12' ceiling. I leveled the floor carefully and poured a 3½" concrete slab.

Since I wasn't experienced in laying concrete block, I used OSB to form a 7' tall, 6" thick wall with one layer of #3 rebar. Next, I built a second set of forms with the inside 5' from the outside of the first set of forms. I then saved for a few months so I could pay for a load of concrete and the pump to get it into the basement. Mom and Dad's house was post WW II, but large for the time and sat on a 2½ acre lot.

Going into my second year of prepping, I got the walls poured and the shelter was beginning to take shape. I removed the OSB for later use and filled the space between the walls with soil that I moistened and tamped with a rented tamper. I didn't have much trouble until I was near the top of the walls. They extended from the bottom of the hole in the floor to almost 4' above the basement floor.

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Maybe I should give you some background. Hi, my name is Barry Simmons. I'm 27 and single. I live in Apache Junction, east of Phoenix. I went into the Army right out of high school and put in my four years of active duty. I worked construction after that while I waited out my 4 year reserve requirement and attended the one weekend per month and the two week summer sessions. I made E-5. During my third year of active duty, Mom, Dad and my Sister Brenda were in a head-on collision. Mom and Dad were killed outright and Brenda was in critical condition. She died 5 days after the collision.

I ended up with the house and everything in it. The attorney arranged for a service to tend to the house until I was released from active duty. I had some money from the estate and the insurance. About a third of that went to pay for the plots, funerals and hospital bills not covered by insurance.

I boxed up all the clothing and stored it in the basement. I stripped the beds and laundered the bedding before making up the beds with clean linen and covering the beds with sheets of plastic to keep the dust out. Next, I went through the pantry and made a shopping list. I bought a membership at Costco and another at Sam's Club. I laid in a one year supply of groceries, storing most on the shelves in the basement and paying for it all out the estate money.

Mom and Dad had a large old fire safe and it contained important papers plus Dad's coin collection. It's not quite like it sounds, Dad only had 3 sizes of coins, halves, quarters and dimes, all dated 1964 and in uncirculated condition in the original bank rolls. One thousand dollars in each denomination, face value. He bought gold coins when

they became legal to own and had a tube of each, one tenth, one quarter, one half and one ounce coins plus partial rolls of the same denominations.

Anyway, I converted most of the remaining funds into gold Eagles. I hadn't before, because I wanted the remaining money available to pay the company tending to the house. The cost of gold coins is determined by three things, the price of gold, the minting cost and the dealer premium. The minting cost is about the same per coin and the dealer premium is usually a set percentage of the value of the coin, including minting cost. Therefore, a one tenth ounce coin doesn't cost one tenth of the cost of a one ounce coin.

Once I had a good fulltime job, I converted the remains of the estate into gold. That was my second prep step, the first being the one year supply of groceries. My third was assembling the armory and a portion of the ammo I wanted. My fourth was the acquisition of the year of food from Walton and the fifth, obviously, construction of the shelter, which I haven't completed. I've just finished putting in the OSB form for the ceiling of the shelter and two support posts. The inside of the shelter is 16' wide by 28' long. The basement, itself, is 32' wide by 56' long and the second shelter wall intrudes into the remaining basement a bit.

Dad didn't have a gun safe, electing to store the firearms in a gutted locking office cabinet with a rifle rack and one shelf for handguns. He had a Winchester model 12 and a pre-64 Winchester model 70 in .30-06. At the moment, the cabinet contains his rifle and shotgun, my .30-30, my .22, the STG-58, my Mossberg and Glock 21. The ammo is stacked next to the cabinet.

I just recently passed my amateur extra class exam. I waited until they dropped the 5wmp Morse code requirement. I don't have a transceiver, just a receiver so far. I have my eye on a Kenwood or Icom, I haven't decided. I looked at the Yaesu, but they're big bucks. My CB was a Galaxy DX2547 AM/SSB CB Base Station with an old  $\frac{5}{8}$  wave Radio Shack Antenna.

When I had the money, I had the posts and overhead of the shelter poured in a continuous pour. I used #3 rebar again for reinforcement. Since it didn't matter, I just finished the top with a screed finish. They're curing now and should be ready soon. I intend to fill the space between the overhead and basement joists with compacted soil.

When the soil is compacted in place, the overhead will be 5' of soil over 6" of concrete. I may use a combination of loose soil and soil in sandbags, I haven't decided. I have decided on a few things. The toilet will be composting. No shower in the shelter or bathroom sink. The kitchen sink was enough and it was filled from a water barrel and drained into a trashcan. I rigged it so I could pump the trashcan empty into the septic system. Better not talk about that too much, city ordinances and all. Water could come from either the city water or my irrigation well. It tested pretty good but a Britta filter made it taste a little better.

The reason I finally went with a combination of soil and sandbags was the fact that I wanted access to the joists, if necessary. Got a pair of unmatched twin beds from Goodwill and replaced the mattresses. I also got a pair, unmatched, 4 drawer dressers. Another used office storage cabinet (grounded) gave me a faraday cage.

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That was about the time, February 2007, that Dubya brought up the ABMs in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic. It was also about then that the company started to get fewer housing starts. The boss told us he'd start with a hiring freeze to preserve jobs and if push came to shove, he'd lay off on the basis of seniority. That put me near the middle of the employees.

With that in mind, I devoted every penny to my preps. I got 2 complete suits with boots, gloves, tape and masks from Approved Gas Masks. I bought the Package from KI4U and added a CD V-700 and a CD V-717 plus an AMP 200 from Arrow Tech in Rolla, ND. I sold just enough of my gold to get the Kenwood TS-2000, a tower and a MSJ Vertical antenna. I had the tower installed by a contractor and mounted the ten band vertical myself.

I bought a used 60"x30" office table and 2 used chairs for my radio center. Going over my LTS food supplies, I realized I needed a grain grinder if I was going to use those super pails. Frugal came to my rescue and I picked up a few other things while I was at it. Mom's cold pack canner was still on the shelf in the basement along with all the empty jars. I ordered a case of regular mouth lids and 5 12 count cases of pickling spices from Canning Pantry. I doubted that ordering more lids would have made much difference because they'd become too old to use.

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The Republican Party settled on our Senator, John McCain, and the Governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin for their ticket. The Democrats selected Barack Obama and Senator Joe Biden for their ticket. The Dems won with about 53% of the vote. I had a sneaking suspicion that the Democrats might win and had filled all of the holes in my ammo supplies, including practice ammo. It's well that I did, firearm and ammo sales went through the roof.

On top of that, I began to evaluate the wisdom of staying in the Phoenix area. Apache Junction is 37 miles due east of downtown Phoenix. It is also about 86 miles due east of Wintersburg, the Palo Verde site. However, I still had a job and roots. It seemed from the news that the major concern was the economy followed by the President's push for National Healthcare.

Ted Kennedy died and the Governor appointed a Democrat to fill the empty seat until the special election was held. Apparently someone wasn't happy with the President, the

Healthcare push or something...a Republican was elected to fill the seat. Let me back track and fill in some more.

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Where were you on September 11, 2004? I was at Fort Bragg on 9/11 in the Captain's office being informed about the traffic accident in Mesa. I drove home, only stopping for gas. I spent two days with Brenda before she died. I called and was granted a few days additional leave to tie up loose ends.

I was in my last year of active duty and had pulled a single tour in Iraq earlier, in the general area of Balad AB, aka Camp Anaconda. It was at one of the FOBs in Diyala Province. Make it home in one piece and before they even thought of sending me back, I was a short timer, counting the days.

That's probably enough of my background for the moment. My high school sweetheart said she had no intention of being a camp follower and told me I didn't need to bother to write. At least Mom shipped out a care package about once a month. They generally contained batteries, some sweets and things that were hard to get over there.

If I think of anything else, I'll insert it later.

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In March 2009 I ordered an additional one year deluxe food supply from Walton. Everyone already knew the State of the Union, bad and getting worse. I got around to raising my Antenna tower and running the amateur bands occasionally. I decided that what I really needed was a beam and ordered one from Cushcraft plus a rotor and the controls. My radio was protected from lightning by an Alpha Delta air gap and I kept the antennas grounded when I wasn't on the Kenwood.

Later, I added a Cobra 148GTL SSB CB radio with a Wilson antenna to my modified Dodge Ram 3500 plus a mid-priced HF radio. I'd gotten the truck on the cheap side because of the blown engine and damaged automatic transmission. Rather than having it repaired, I had a non-electronic diesel and a stick shift installed. After, I putzed around and enclosed the radios in a fine copper mesh faraday cage and switched to slide on antenna connectors with the actual radios mounted on slide out mounts.

Assessing my situation, I concluded that I was as ready as I needed to be and began setting funds aside for a pair of black powder firearms, a single action revolver and lever action carbine. That was my one and only difficulty in choosing firearms. I went with a used Ruger Vaquero in a 5½" barrel, but couldn't decide whether I wanted a Marlin 1894 Cowboy in .45 Colt or a Marlin 1895 Cowboy in .45-70. Eventually, I bought both rifles and the revolver. The 1894 would allow me to carry both long and short barrel firearms in the same caliber. The .45-70 would give me more power. The revolver and

1894 were purchased at the same time and I ordered the Marlin 1895 about 6 weeks later.

The ammo was Remington, 250gr .45 Colt and 405gr .45-70 Government. Both had round nose lead slugs. I even added additional boxes of 150gr and 170gr Core-Lokt .30-30 and 165gr, 180gr and 220gr Core-Lokt Soft point for in .30-06. All I needed to reload the .45 Colt and .45-70 were inexpensive Lee Loaders and large pistol and large rifle primers. I bought both pistol and rifle Pyrodex.

I hit every tire store in the area and collected all the used wheel weights they'd part with. Most insisted I pay salvage value for the weights. And, while I know that wheel weights aren't the perfect bullet material, they beat the heck out of whatever was in second place. Once I added the molds, melting pot and ladle, that part was covered.

One fall day in 2009 when I stopped on the way to work to pick up a large coffee, this cutie in front of me in the line turned quickly into me and spilled her cup of coffee all over my clean shirt. She couldn't stop apologizing. She gave me her business card and told me to send her the laundry bill. Her card identified her as Carolyn Johnson, the manager of a SAS shoe store in Apache Junction. It wasn't a big deal; I just added my shirt to the wash and forgot about it. About 4-5 weeks later, she and I both stopped at the same café to get our morning coffees.

"Do you have the receipt for getting your shirt laundered?"

"Nah, I just added to the wash. It really wasn't that big of a deal."

"I'd sure like to make it up to you; how about dinner at Perkins here in the mall? It's good food, good service and inexpensive. It's the least I can do."

"Ms. Johnson there's no need to feel obligated. But, if you insist, when?"

"What time do you get off from work?"

"Generally about 5."

"Perkins at 6?"

"Ok, I can get a quick shower and change. I'll see you at Perkins at 6."

"Nothing fancy."

"I was just going to wear jeans and one of my cowboy shirts."

"Perfect. See you tonight."

That's how I met Carolyn. That night over Club sandwiches and fries, we exchanged some of our respective backgrounds. She gave me her home phone number and her cell phone number and told me to feel free to call. We got busy for a while and it was a month before I called. We made a date to eat out, at Perkins again, and catch a movie.

She had a BA degree from ASU Tempe. I told her I had a BE from SHK. She got a chuckle when she figured out that was a Bachelor's Education from the School of Hard Knocks. Carolyn liked my sense of humor. My advanced degree was Army Basic Training and Advanced Infantry Training. My job skills came from OJT. She didn't have any problem translating the various acronyms.

She spent Thanksgiving and Christmas with her family in Tucson. I ate at one of the multitude of restaurants that attracted the snow birds. Carolyn and I spent New Year's Day 2010 at my home and we exchanged the Christmas presents each had gotten the other.

"I hope that's ok. I'm not totally sure why I got it. I had the impression you were a prep-  
per and I didn't know if you had a water filter."

"I didn't, thank you. This is rather more than what I got you, a Katadyn Hiker isn't  
cheap."

"They're not that much and I got the bottle adapter and the activated carbon to go with  
it."

"I hope this is the right size, I had to guess."

"Are you trying to tell me something?"

"What?"

"A pair of Wranglers and two western shirts?"

"You don't like them?"

"I love them."

"I've seen you wear jeans but never western style shirts."

"I have them. They've been washed so many times they're showing their age and I don't  
wear them in public."

"Is the size right?"

"Yes. How did you know?"



“I didn’t; it was flat out guessing.”

“Size 3, 32” inseam, Cash riding jean. Perfect. Shirts are the right size too. I’ll have to wash the sizing out and I’ll wear them the next time we go out. That will give me time to replace the heels on my boots and get my hat cleaned.”

“I’m happy you like what I got you.”

“Can I have a tour of your home?”

“Sure. We’ll start with the master bedroom. Ok, that’s here on the left, the only bath is this center door and my room was the one here in the corner and my sister’s was the one next to it. You’ve seen the living room. The dining room is off the kitchen and part of the living room area.”

“Basement?”

“Yes.”

“Well, can I see it?”

“Sure, not much to see. Watch your step. Over there are the shelves with the extra food I keep on hand plus the empty canning supplies and other junk. The main point of interest is my storm shelter.”

“It doesn’t storm that much in this area. This isn’t in tornado alley.”

“Yeah, well, Phoenix could be a prime target and it’s only about 86 miles to the Palo Verde reactors.”

“I thought so. It explains the blast door and air purifier from American Safe Rooms. Where is your generator?”

“I don’t have one. I have some PV panels new in the box and a charge controller. I was waiting to hook it all up until after I got the inverters and batteries. They’ll go in that empty space over there. I figured on using a manual switch.”

“You have a well?”

“Irrigation well. The water is safe but I use a Britta filter. I also have septic in case the sewer was blocked. That’s on a manual valve the same as the water.”

“Tell me what you’re missing?”

“Well, a generator, fuel, propane and conversion jets. The fireplace will heat most of the house in a pinch. I have 8 cords of firewood. I have the radiation equipment and two outfits from Approved Gas Masks.”

“I could help in exchange for a place in the shelter.”

“I didn’t think your job paid that well.”

“It doesn’t. I only manage to save about five percent of my take home pay. What I was thinking was that it seems foolish for you to live alone in a three bedroom house and for me to pay what I do for a one bedroom apartment...”

“You’re talking about moving in with me?”

“Yes. Oh, separate bedrooms of course. We could take what I spend on rent and utilities and add that to my savings. It wouldn’t take all that long to complete your preparations.”

“I’m not so sure it’s a good idea.”

“You don’t like me? Or, maybe you don’t trust me?”

“This is the first time the subject of us came up in terms of more than a casual friendship. Yes I like you. What’s not to trust? If you have more than a casual interest in me, it might be a good time to discuss it.”

“When we met...the accident with the coffee?”

“Yes, what about it?”

“It wasn’t an accident. We both usually stop at the same place for morning take out coffee. I’d seen you several times and was looking for an excuse to meet you. When you didn’t contact me about your shirt, I thought I’d struck out.”

“Let me put it like this Carolyn. You’re 5’8, size 3, a real cutie, brunette hair almost to your waist, nice bust, flat tummy, hazel eyes... There is nothing I don’t like about you.”

“Barry, you’re about 5’10, 150, haven’t noticed any fat, military style haircut...high and tight, and are interested in preps. My family has been involved in preps since 1962, long before I was born. It started with my grandfather and was passed to my father and now to me and my two brothers. Of course the family has been at it for the better part of 50 years so about all we do now is rotate supplies.”

“Do you shoot?”

“What, you don’t think a female can handle a firearm?”

“I know they can. The question was do you shoot?”

“With every one of my firearms. I’m not quite good enough to compete, but I’m no slouch.”

“What do you have in your personal armory?”

“My personal rifle is a Springfield Armory Super Match with a Night Force 8.5-32x56mm Mil Dot scope on A.R.M.S. mounts. I have 25 CMI 20-round magazines. My sniping rifle is a McMillan Tac-50 equipped with a Night Force 12-42x56mm Mil Dot scope and a Raptor 6X night vision scope. I have eleven magazines. I also have a Weatherby Vanguard in .30-06 with a Leupold VX-3 2.5-8x36mm scope.

“Let’s see...I have three other rifles, all Marlin, an 1894 Cowboy in .45 Colt, an 1895 Cowboy in .45-70 and a model 39A Golden trigger .22LR. I have a Mossberg 590A1 with a speed stock, sidesaddle, elastic buttstock shell pouch and a spare barrel for wing shooting. Handguns include a Colt Single Action Army in .45 Colt with a 5½” barrel, a Kimber Tactical Custom II with 8 spare magazines and an Ultra Covert II with 4 spare magazines for my backup.

“Ammo wise, I have a mixed case of .22LR, 5,000 rounds of mixed 168gr Match BTHP and 165gr BTSP for the Super Match from Black Hills. My .50 caliber ammo is Hornady Match grade loaded with Hornady A-MAX bullets but I only have about 1,500 rounds. I have assorted hunting loads for the Weatherby, maybe 500 rounds of each load. My shotgun ammo is Federal Premium Personal Defense in 00 and #4 plus slugs and a case each of #2 and #6 shot. Unless I missed something, I think that is it.”

“You have that here in Mesa?”

“Wouldn’t do me much good in Tucson.”

“Not to be rude, but you have my curiosity up. What else do you have?”

“The obligatory BOB in my trunk. Additionally I have a more complete GOOD bag built around a Kifaru MSR with the gun bearer option. I have a Mountain Hardwear Trango 3.1 and Lamnia -30° sleeping bag and inflatable mattress. I have two GI one quart canteens and an E Tool on my pistol belt along with the 4 double pistol magazine pouches and holster. There’s a Cold Steel 24” Latin Machete strapped onto the pack and I have a Hunter folding knife and a Trail Master fixed blade knife both Cold Steel. I have enough Mountain House food and drink packs for two weeks. I figured that would allow me to walk home.

“However, you’ve probably seen my car. It’s a restored 1957 Chevy that my father and two brothers restored as my graduation present from ASU. I have an extended supply of repair parts including ignition, brakes, a rebuilt starter, spare starter solenoid and volt-

age regulator. There are a whole set of parts, especially the ones that are getting hard to find. If we had an EMP, my car should run and I have the parts if it won't."

"That's the upside of living in the southwest, no rusted out cars."

"Now you know a little more about me. What about the living arrangement?"

"Promise to keep your hands to yourself unless we both agree?"

"Do you?"

"Absolutely!"

"I'm on a month to month basis; we can move me the end of the month. Or, I guess we could just start now with the prep supplies I have."

"Want to give it a week to see if we both feel the same way?"

"There's no rush, it's only the first. We have over 4 weeks to decide. I would like to clean it up good and get back my last month and security deposit. Are you willing to help?"

"Furnished or unfurnished?"

"Furnished."

"You won't have much to move, then?"

"About 3 pickup loads."

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The following weekend we moved Carolyn to my house and she took Brenda's bedroom. We spent the entire day Sunday cleaning up her apartment and decided that she should just go ahead and tell the manager she'd moved out and the place was ready for inspection.

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 2

She got a check in the mail for her security deposit and last month about a week later. It even included a little of the January rent because her apartment had been rented and occupied almost immediately. She also called her Mom and gave her the new phone number. I was a bit concerned about what her parents might think but she assured me that she had talked to her mother about the possibility both at Thanksgiving and again at Christmas. She said her mother was expecting it, but we'd need to drive down to Tucson soon so her parents could meet me.

I think I sweated out two gallons by the time we reached Tucson. They lived out on the edge, not in town on about 40 acres of irrigated grass with horses running free in the pasture. It also had a barn and a grain silo. Carolyn's father, Clyde, gave me the tour.

"The loft is mostly hay with a little straw bedding. The grain silo contains premixed horse feed. I get the silo topped off each fall and the hay comes several times a year. Over here behind the house is our shelter. My father built it using scaled up plans from a Civil Defense handbook in 1962. As a matter of fact, it was completed on September 30<sup>th</sup>, quite the coincidence.

"We've added on to the shelter since, put in a better generator, diesel of course, and an imported Swiss air purification system and blast door. It has a protection factor of over one million. It has a basement the same size as the inner shelter walls holding our food supplies, armory and other necessities. Come on into the house, Trudy should have the coffee ready."

"Thanks."

"It's Barry, right?"

"Yes sir, Barry Simmons. I just turned 29 and work construction in the Phoenix area."

"Fulltime or seasonal?"

"Fulltime, so far. I went into the Army right out of high school; four years active duty and four years of National Guard. I've been out a while now. No college. I'm a carpenter and have no masonry skills. I got into preps a few years back. I'm maybe 85-90% done having everything in place. You do understand that this is a living arrangement, don't you? We're not living together the way it's usually taken."

"Why not?"

"We've known each other less than a year, sir. We've dated casually...dinner, movies, church once or twice, dancing a few times. I didn't want to rush Carolyn because I really like her. I thought I would let her take the lead."

“Whose idea was it for her to move in with you?”

“Hers.”

“Does she need to put a ring in your nose?”

“But...”

I really liked Clyde and Trudy. They were about the same age as my parents. Before we left to return to Apache Junction, both of her brothers just happened to stop by for a brief visit and said they’d see me again. Yeah right, they were checking me out! When we got into my pickup to return home, Carolyn had an ear-to-ear grin plastered on her face.

“Just eat a canary?”

“Sort of yes. Things in the bed of the pickup are all of my remaining things except for my horses.”

“How many horses do you have?”

“Four. American Saddlebred, 2 mares, a stallion and a gelding. I don’t care for the saddle seat style of saddle and only have Western trail saddles. We could bring them up, but it would cost too much to board them. That would defeat our goal of finishing off our preps.”

Why not? See me again? Our preps?

“I’m going to ask you a serious question and I need a serious answer. When your father and I were visiting, I assured him that we weren’t living together as most people take it. He asked, Why not? When I met your two brothers, both said they’d see me again. You just referred to our preps. Are we an item?”

“Do you want to be an item?”

“Yes but I’m a little old fashioned. What’s not to like? I’m very fond of you but I’m not sure about being in love.”

“No love at first sight?”

“A definite attraction, for sure. I don’t know exactly what I’m feeling; I’ve never been in love that I know of. Do I want to spend the rest of my life with you? Quite possibly, but we just don’t know each other well enough to know.”

“Ok, but if you want to take it a step further, a kiss would be nice.”

“As soon as we get home.”

Oh, she had lips that set mine on fire. Her bust was burning holes into my chest. It didn't take long to discover that she wasn't wearing a padded bra. Anyway, I guess we're an item. What? I may be slow, but I'm not stupid and I'm not THAT old fashioned.

We had a very good start on completing our preps with her savings, the \$2,000 in returned rental deposit, security deposit and half month's rent (\$800 times 2.5). Her brother, Robert, had a Cummins RV diesel generator, a QD 12.5 that he'd taken out of a wrecked motorhome. It had about 350 hours on it and he bought it for \$6,900. Meanwhile, I picked up the jets to convert my hot water heater, stove and furnace to propane. I started to scout around for a good used service station tank, 10,000 gallons or larger.

I searched the internet too and finally located a tank that was cleaned up for about 20% of the cost of a new tank. It held 15,000 gallons and was manufactured by Containment Solutions in Texas. It was a double wall fiberglass tank 10' in diameter and 29' long, model DWT-6 Type II (10)-15,000 gallons. I bought the tank and contacted Containment Solutions for installation instructions. They sent me a brochure. The tank arrived before we got the hole excavated, but I discovered that I had the bare tank and all the pumps and whatnot weren't included. Containment Solutions gave me the name of a local petroleum distributor and suggested that I have him install the tank.

Carolyn called the distributor and got the installation cost and we started saving the additional money that would take. Around late August, early September, we had the tank installed and plumbed to a fuel dispenser and the generator. It was about the least expensive single fuel dispenser available and to insure the generator had fuel, a shielded electrical pump was installed to feed the generator's tank.

We went to her folks for Thanksgiving and I proposed. Carolyn said yes and Clyde took me aside.

“Traditionally father's pay for their daughter's weddings. I'll give you a choice, the wedding with all the bells and whistles or a check so the two of you can complete your preps. Talk to her and let me know.”

“Offer you a check in lieu of paying for a wedding?”

“How did you know?”

“It's was Mom's idea.”

“Whatever you want.”

“Mom said he'd write out a check for \$15,000. How much diesel would that buy?”

“About 6,000 gallons.”

“I’m fine with a Judge or Justice of Peace if you’d like to get a jump on filling the tank. Hopefully, we’ll have it filled and the PV system in before anything happens.”

I wore a suit and she had a nice cocktail dress. I took her to a very nice steak/seafood place for our wedding dinner. We called her folks and told them that we were married and all \$15,000 was in the diesel tank. Clyde asked about the propane tank and I explained I was having trouble getting one. He asked if there was space and I told him I had plenty of room.

Two weeks later, Robert, John and he showed up with a 5,500 gallon tank on the back of a borrowed truck that also had a crane. The cradles were placed and the tank set in place. He told Carolyn and me to call when we had it connected and he’d see what he could do about getting some propane in the tank. Carolyn got the line put in and called Daddy. Daddy had 5,000 gallons delivered. Needless to say, I teased her a bit about being Daddy’s Little Girl. Her response? “You damn bet!” Propane was running right at \$2-2.10 a gallon at the time.

From that point forward, we took the time to mount the PV panels and run the wiring to the basement. We began adding one battery per month. When it came time for Christmas, we went to Tucson again. Clyde took me aside and said that our real Christmas present was the tank and propane but there might be some small gifts so we had something under the tree.

We got 2 pairs of jeans and 4 of the shirts we liked. Trudy got our sizes, for birthdays, she said. With gold running on the order of \$1,100 an ounce in late 2010, I could have sold enough to fill the diesel tank, but didn’t.

As we accumulated money in 2011, we continued to add to the diesel tank, generally 1,000 gallons at a time whenever we had the money. I was flabbergasted when Clyde pulled up in a semi tanker driven by a friend.

“I’ve got 8,000 gallons of biodiesel here. I figured I’d top off your tank and put what’s left in our tank.”

“Are you sure you want to do that Clyde?”

“It was \$1.25 a gallon. Speak now or forever hold your peace.”

“There’s room for 7,000 gallons.”

“I know.”

“You know someone making biodiesel?”



“Nah, I hijacked the load. Yeah, we run B-100 fulltime. Trudy sent up your birthday presents but I’m to tell you not to open them until your birthdays.”

“Thank you.”

“Hi Daddy.”

“Hi precious; I’ve got enough biodiesel to top off your tank and your birthday presents. Coffee on?”

“Three minutes.”

As soon as the fuel was off loaded, they did a bathroom break, had coffee and headed back to Tucson.

“Our birthday presents aren’t the same Barry. I already have what Mom got you and you would look silly wearing what she got me.”

“What did she get you?”

“Maternity wear.”

“We’re expecting?”

“We’re expecting.”

“Wow. I’ve got to sit down.”

“How close are we to having our preps completed?”

“Eight more batteries and one more inverter. Why?”

“When we get them finished, I’d like to move my 6 horses up here.”

“You have 4 horses.”

“Well, they did their thing and I also have a colt and a filly. We’ll geld the colt and add the filly to my breeding stock when she’s old enough. I’ll probably leave them there now that I think about it, and let Daddy see to the training. I think I’m going to work a stallion trade with Johnny to get a different bloodline.”

“When did you find out you were pregnant?”

“Officially?”

“There are choices?”

“I suspected it about a week ago and got one of those home testing kits. When it was positive, I saw my doctor and it was confirmed yesterday afternoon. Since I knew that Mom had already bought me maternity clothes and that Daddy was bringing up the fuel today, I decided to surprise you. You don’t pay much attention to the calendar that I mark up so you have to be told when I’m having my period.”

“How long before the doctor can do an ultrasound?”

“I’m not going to get one unless there is a medical reason. There’s nothing wrong with being surprised. If our preps are completed and your job looks steady, I may quit my job instead of just taking maternity leave. There’s plenty of room for a garden and we have oodles of supplies.”

“Ok, but let’s wait and see. I could be sitting home babysitting and growing the garden while you work unless housing starts pick up.”

“Where do you stand now?”

“I’d be one of the first let go after he’s gone through the group I was in. If I can hang on a couple of more years, I won’t be so worried.”

“Who knows about our preparations besides us and my family?”

“No one. I did all the basement work myself. Silence is golden. The only two people that have been in the basement since I began prepping are you and me. Until I met you, I’d been a loner. Between work, doing the preps and sometimes stopping for a beer after work, I never made any close friends or looked up friends from my high school days.”

“You didn’t date?”

“That would have taken money away from my prepping. I should tell you about something. That small fire safe in shelter is chock full of money. My father heard about the government planning on introducing 40% silver coins in 1965 and spent \$3,000 acquiring new coins from the bank. That was before I was born, but I know it was big money for them to spend. He also had one 20 count tube each of one, one half, one quarter and one tenth ounce Gold Eagles and partial rolls of the same denominations. I eventually bought more of the smaller coins but sold a few to get my Kenwood radio and the tower.”

“Daddy did the same thing except he bought Krugerrands. And he bought \$3,000 of each denomination of the 90% silver coins.”

“Three?”

“Yes, three children, three sets of \$1,000 face value coins in each denomination. Plus we each got Krugerrands, one 20 count tube of each in all four weights.”

“For a couple that has a nearly empty bank account, it seems that we have more money than we imagined. We each have at least 37 ounces of gold and 2,888 ounces of silver. That’s roughly \$170,000, maybe \$175,000 counting my extra coins. Just one thing, no wild mushrooms.”

“Plus the house is paid for and we’re both working.”

“Don’t forget a year’s worth of LTS food and six months of regular groceries in the basement.”

“I’d like to get that back up to what you had before we got together, a full year.”

“I need to add 7½ gallons of PRI-D to the diesel fuel too. That will cost \$700 at \$85 a gallon.”

“If it wasn’t so sad, it would be hilarious. Ok, we’ll get the PRI-D first and then start working on adding another one year supply of groceries for a second person. I should be able to do pretty well between Costco, Sam’s Club and grocery store sales; especially when they run those heavy duty loss leaders. I’ll have to hit several stores because they’re usually limited, but the savings more than pay for the gas.”

“I should get in to see the dentist and have a physical. At least get my teeth cleaned at the dentist and get a chest X-Ray because of all the dust contamination I’m around at times. It can lead to extrinsic allergic alveolitis.”

“You do that, one of us under a doctor’s care at a time will be sufficient. Is that something like black lung disease?”

“Sort of the same cause, external particles in the lungs, but different. Both conditions are somewhat occupation specific.”

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Got my teeth cleaned, one small filling. Doctor couldn’t find anything wrong so he drew blood and sent me for a chest X-ray. He said I wouldn’t hear from him unless there was a problem. Carolyn was set up for regular visits and pre-natal vitamins. It was some time before she started to show and had to switch to the maternity clothes. My birthday present was an Outback Drivers coat with removable fleece liner and a yellow rain slicker. We had our supplies rounded out and the new stallion, 2 mares and the older gelding boarded not far away.

Carolyn’s expected delivery date was December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011. She managed to talk me into going into the delivery room and one of the nurses told me if I felt like I was going to

pass out to get into a chair they kept handy. However, it was her first and she didn't go into labor until New Year's Eve. We named our son William Clyde Simmons after my father and Carolyn's. Seven pounds 4 ounces, 20" long. I passed on the offer to catch William as he exit the birth canal. Clyde and Trudy drove up when I called to tell them we were on our way to the hospital on New Year's Eve. William was the first baby born in the Phoenix area on January 1<sup>st</sup>. We got a package of gifts from local merchants, probably for the advertising. Trudy had cotton diapers, pins, plastic diaper covers, diaper bag, diaper pail and several Gerber Onesies, sort of an infant bodysuit, in white.

We had a small assortment of baby food, cereal, vegetables, applesauce and the like. Trudy had six cases. Clyde said that if we didn't mind, they'd like to stick around for a few days. I told him Trudy and he could either use our bed or the bed in the shelter. Both were Queen sized and I'd moved Mom and Dad's to the shelter and got us a new bed. I'd added two additional bedrooms to the shelter and each had a twin bed and one of those Goodwill dressers. I also moved the chest of drawers and dresser, and replaced them with something of more recent styling.

He chose the shelter bedroom. Carolyn and I had a dozen bottles, plenty of nipples, a bottle warmer and a breast pump so we could accumulate extra milk as needed. We had discussed the two horses still down in Tucson and decided to bring them up once they were trained. We had agreed that if our baby was a boy, he'd get the gelding and if a girl, she'd get the mare. However, I was informed that the filly wouldn't be a mare until she was four. Since the colt had been gelded, he was a gelding regardless of age. I let that pass, assuming I'd pick it up by osmosis.

Two things happened shortly after William was born, I was made assistant foreman and Carolyn quit her job. The company had picked up a major construction project for a housing tract with 212 homes. I was also told that, depending on my performance, I was being considered as a foreman for a second construction crew.

Trudy spent most of her time with Carolyn and Clyde went over our preparations with me. About the only truly negative comment he made was about my STG-58. We took it to a range and he had a chance to shoot it. After that, he dropped the subject. He did like my Glock 21, I was sure.

The next day, he borrowed my pickup and drove over to Phoenix giving no indication of where he was going or the purpose of his trip. It was immediately obvious when he returned late that afternoon. He had a rifle identical to the one Carolyn had right down to the 25 CMI magazines and the Night Force scope. He just gave the things to me and told me to buy some good 7.62x51mm ammo, like Black Hills. Well, shoot, why not, it improved our interchangeability. It was identical even including the Harris bipod.

I'd never really examined Carolyn's rifle and I spotted a muzzle brake on mine rather than the National Match flashhider. So, I checked her rifle and found the same feature. He said there was an accessory for both rifles he'd held back and would bring both the

next time they came up. I got to adding it all up in my head and realized that Clyde either had money to burn, considered his daughter to be special or both.

Clyde had something in mind concerning our .45s and he discussed the subject at length with Carolyn. He asked if he could see my Glock 21 and I dug it out. He went back to Carolyn and then returned my pistol about 30 minutes later, borrowed the pickup and left again, returned with a Glock 21, 2 Glock 30s, 4 spare magazines each and 2 extended, threaded Glock 21 barrels.

He explained that a company in Mesa made the Glock barrels but since he couldn't find reasonably priced extended threaded Kimber barrels, he talked Carolyn into switching from her Kimber to the Glock. He had suppressors for the M1As at home as well as .45 caliber suppressors. Something he said might be handy some rainy day in the future. And, that was what he was bringing back when he returned in 2-3 weeks. They weren't on the registry so we'd have to remember that Silence is Golden, in more ways than one.

Later that evening when I explained everything that Clyde had said and done that day, she said she wasn't surprised. He had considered getting a custom barrel for her Kimber but the price was unreasonably high and would void the warranty. She assured me that if the pistol silencers required Nielsen devices, they'd be included. And, as far as the money he was spending, he could easily afford it.

After she fed and burped William, she asked me to change him and warned me about the fountain of youth. She should have also suggested my gas mask. I managed, barely with her lending me hints on how to pin on the diaper. But, he's a cute one, that's for sure.

Three weeks later, Clyde and Trudy were back. He had a package for me containing the 4 suppressors, two by Surefire for the M1As and two for the Glock from a name I didn't recognize. They also brought a Baby Scrape CBRN and a Scrape CBRN 30. He was way ahead of my thinking.

He walked our lot and pointed out a good area for a garden. He said he'd see about getting a load of composted manure up before the start of gardening season. He asked how we were fixed on jars and I showed him those on the shelves in the basement. He said they might have a few extra they could bring up next trip. Between you and me, I almost felt like I'd been adopted. He obviously approved of me, in a big way.

What I later learned from Carolyn was that her family was very open and anything I told her that wasn't in the strictest confidence was shared with her parents and probably her brothers. She also said that if I told her it was just between the two of us, she wouldn't share the information. I agreed to identify any obvious secrets that she had to know about. I also told her there wouldn't be many.

I got the promotion to foreman about two months later with an additional pay raise. They were slab homes and went up quickly. The boss said the project would take maybe 18 months and perhaps longer. The completion deadline was 21 months, start to finish. As soon as the slab cured, the framing crew could frame the house in a day, day and one half depending on whether it was a one or two story. It was a large crew and they were very good at their job.

The electrician came in next and took about the same amount of time. As soon as the base stucco coat was applied, the insulation crew shot in the foam followed by the dry-wall crew hanging the drywall and shooting the ceiling. The linoleum was laid followed by the plumbers and mechanical subcontractor. While one crew of finish carpenters installed the kitchen and bathroom cabinets and moldings, painters start painting in the empty rooms. The electricians returned to add the switches, duplexes and covers, the plumbers installed the fixtures and finally the carpet was installed. It was pretty slick and we were completing about just shy of two houses a day.

I ended up pulling a small amount of overtime but got no extra pay because I was now considered to be management. Mostly a few minutes daily making sure my crews didn't leave anything lying around that might get stolen. We went to Tucson for Independence Day, Labor Day and Thanksgiving. On the trip down on Thanksgiving I learned that we were expecting number two. Between that and the fact that we had 3 months wages in savings, it was a joyous visit.

Our garden did especially well yielding 56 quarts of spaghetti sauce, canned tomatoes, canned corn, canned green beans, 500 pounds give or take of potatoes, acorn and butternut squash and enough cucumbers to make 14 quarts of Dill, Polish Dill, sweet and bread and butter giving us 56 quarts of pickles, canned carrots, canned beets and white onions. We didn't do the Kosher Polish Dills this year. Trudy supplied a half dozen or more spice plants which were harvested and dried. I'm missing one or two things here. Right, watermelon and green, yellow and red peppers.

Campaigning for the 2012 election was just ramping up. Hillary had resigned as Secretary of State and intended to make another run for President. It appeared she might have a chance because Obama's ranking in the polls was down and still falling. He had failed to carry out a major portion of his 2008 campaign promises and they were coming back to haunt him. He had pulled all US troops from Iraq while increasing troops in Afghanistan. Enduring Freedom was being waged in Afghanistan, The Philippines, the Horn of Africa and Saharan Africa, with marginal success. Other than Afghanistan, the activities were focused on anti-terrorism. Add that the inability of Congress to implement National Healthcare and various violations of other campaign promises, like open bidding on government contracts and he was spending more time explaining his decisions than making them. He also looked like he'd aged 10 years.

Unemployment was better; it was down to a fraction under 6%. The banking problems were closer to being finally resolved BUT, the 2010 midterm elections had cost the

Dems 3 additional seats in the Senate and almost enough to put the Republicans in control of the house. They were only 2 seats short.

### Silence is Golden – Chapter 3

The automakers were recovering very slowly, helped by that Toyota recall more than anything. What else? Both mares are with foal. China and Russia are conducting war games for the umpteenth time. Iran announced they had tested an operating nuclear weapon causing Israel to increase its defense status to an all-time high.

There is the possibility they may make a pre-emptive strike when the locations of the missile storage site(s) is(are) determined. MSM is following their usual line blaming Israel, with Fox being the only holdout. Two additional DDGs are enroute to the Persian Gulf giving us 2 cruisers and 12 destroyers. A Carrier Strike group is parked in the eastern Med with another in the Persian Gulf. Besides, who knows what those Mad Men in Iran are planning? Both China and Russia indicate they have Mutual Defense Treaties with Iran. In my opinion, China is spread too thin. I think the situation has advanced close to the point of no return. I pray that I'm wrong.

To be sure, Carolyn has inventoried our food supplies and made up a list for Walton's. She also had the grocery store list done. Walton's was the easiest, two deluxe one year supplies. Costco was packed but we did find everything we wanted. Sam's Club was about the same. Maybe people are starting doing similar to what we're doing. I sure wouldn't mind telling them that they're a day late and a dollar short. There is more to it than buying 2 weeks of food.

Carolyn carried one of the NWS radios and I had the other on my belt. The Day Care Center we found near her store was just too expensive. The Lady told us to feel free to check around. We went to one additional with the same results. Carolyn was going to be a stay at home Mom.

We began rereading the Patriot Fiction stories I'd acquired through somewhat nefarious practices. I'd copy them into Word and save them as pdf files and then dump the Word document. Pick a scenario, you'll find that someone has covered it. I took notes concerning possible responses to what I considered the most likely natural and manmade disasters that might fall on us like a ton of bricks.

At the top of the list was a Global Thermonuclear War. An asteroid strike followed closely on its heels. I couldn't decide between ice age and global warming and called them 'long term climate change'. Some things never made the list, like traffic accidents. That's why they invented insurance.

Walton called and advised that they were shipping earlier than usual, using an alternative means of transportation and the difference in shipping costs would be COD, but no drop off fee was involved, if they could deliver to a commercial address. I gave them my work address after checking with the boss. He said whatever it was I had coming would be locked up in the tool crib where expensive tools were stored. I explained that it was 66ft<sup>3</sup> in volume.



You'd think that in a city the size of metropolitan Phoenix you wouldn't have trouble finding ammo. I just wanted to fill in and replace what we'd shot up practicing. I knew the price had to be jacked up out of proportion to its actual worth, but it was better to have than not. All I found was some .30-30 and some .30-06 after checking a dozen stores.

Carolyn did better with the grocery shopping. Trudy drove up to care for William and leave Carolyn free for two days of grocery shopping. She did find everything she wanted, not all of it on sale. She also rather surprised me with her announcement that she'd been by Sears. Their 25ft<sup>3</sup> chest freezer was on sale and she'd have it moved to the basement by the Sears delivery guys.

It would hold the side of Black Angus, the pork loins, hams, butter, bacon, and other things she intended to pick up Saturday when I'd be home and she could go shopping the third and final time. Her short list included whole chickens which would be on sale, frozen vegetables, also on sale and anything else that occurred to her while she was out. I did hate putting the freezer on her Sears Charge, but we'd pay it off ASAP. When I got home Friday after work, she had the side of beef in the freezer along with the other things she intended to freeze. The freezer was barely half filled.

"Would you mind my getting another side?"

"How much room will there be after you add the chickens?"

"More than enough. What you see is the side of beef, 8 cut up pork loins, two cases of Hormel hams, the bacon and butter."

"And the money situation?"

"It's doable."

"What about freezer burn?"

"It's wrapped in plastic then plastic coated butcher paper. He guaranteed it wouldn't burn."

"In that case, order the beef and buy extra chickens, even if you have to hit several stores in the chain."

"I knew you'd feel that way. Uh, I went ahead and ordered the second side and it will be ready Sunday. They're open half days on Sundays. Unless I made a major math error, we can also add 4 more pork loins, another case of hams, as much bacon as I bought the first time and a case of butter."

"And how much cash will there be left? Enough to fill my fuel tanks?"

“More; at least \$600. Oh, Mom and Dad will be back on Saturday with his pickup and trailer. After we finish with the groceries, I’m taking them to Costco and Sam’s Club. She said that Daddy is getting worried based on the news.”

“Did I miss something?”

“I don’t know. Apparently he hasn’t told her what’s bothering him.”

“What, did he see a rerun of *A Fire in the Sky*?”

“What’s that?”

“It was a TV movie starring Richard Crenna about a comet smashing to Phoenix. It came out around ‘78 or ‘79.”

“No, I doubt it’s that. It’s something he’s picking up from the news. She did say that they had both of their freezers stocked recently. You haven’t heard anything that got your attention?”

“You know me, if it’s not on FOX, the History Channel or the Military Channel, I probably missed it.”

“But you’re ok with the extra meat?”

“It’s probably smarter to buy it now than when the dollar is worth less and it costs more.”

“How’s the tract coming?”

“We’ve hit a minor supply snag. I think we’ll have it done within 30 days of the date the boss originally thought. We’ll still be 2 months ahead of schedule. He’s already bidding on other contracts for that time frame. If he lands the one he really wants, it’s a 30 month contract. That should secure our future very nicely.”

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“Carolyn tells me that something is bothering you Clyde. Care to share?”

“I don’t mind sharing, Barry. It’s just that I can’t be specific because I’m not sure what it is. I have this sinking feeling in my gut that something of inordinate magnitude is going to happen in the relatively near future, say a year or less.”

“And Trudy and you are stocking up based on that gut feeling?”

“Yeah...I just don’t know how to explain what I feel. At the moment, there’s nothing of political consequence occurring around the globe. Of course you probably heard about

the moderate increase in activity along the Cascade Range. Even if all of those volcanoes erupted, it wouldn't approach what I feel."

"Maybe a major earthquake in California?"

"No, that's too localized. The only thing that comes to mind is Yellowstone or one of the other calderas' having an explosive eruption. I checked the USGS website and the situations at both the YVO and LVO are stable. For that matter so are the CVO, AVO and HVO. They had that swarm at Yellowstone in early 2010, but nothing came of it. They're still losing trees in Long Valley. If it were something like an eruption of a major caldera, there should be ample warning. Even if both Yellowstone and Long Valley went at the same time and the volume equaled the largest eruptions, we're talking 3,030km<sup>3</sup> or 727mi<sup>3</sup> of ash. And, how likely is that? Not that they weren't major eruptions, Long Valley and Mesa Falls went 7 on the VEI scale and Huckleberry Ridge and Lava Creek went 8."

"Did you see 10.5?"

"Never happen. The science behind the mini-series was so bad it made my teeth ache. The worst earth based disaster would be massive volcanic eruptions which could make *The Year Without a Summer* a walk in the park. We could be looking at *A Decade Without Summers*, or longer. Now if you really want take a pessimistic attitude, couple that with a global nuclear war and/or an asteroid strike. It could cut the world population from 6 plus billion to 6 plus million, or less. There's that population bottleneck maybe 75,000 years ago because of Mt. Toba where mankind was almost extinct. Scientists' call it the Toba Catastrophe. Tambora was a VEI of 7 and Toba was a VEI of 8."

"I'll settle something less exciting if you don't mind. Something like terrorists nuking Palo Verde."

"Be careful what you wish for."

"You know that one?"

"Plus a few more, Barry. Well we'd better get this show on the road. See ya."

When they returned, the trailer was so full it was dangerous to open the doors. The camper shell on the pickup contained almost as much as the trailer. Carolyn said her Dad had gone through an impressive bundle of hundreds. He'd slipped her what was left out of that bundle and we'd have enough to buy everything we'd discussed and quite a bit more.

"Did he tell you why he's so upset?"

"Something undefined that's giving him a sinking feeling in his gut."

“Oh, oh; not good, his gut never lets him down. The doctor wrote me a bunch of prescriptions. It seems he’s into preparedness himself. I didn’t say anything because of the cost. Maybe we’d better just fill the prescriptions and put together that only aid slash first aid kit he suggested.”

“What’s included?”

“Antibiotics, analgesics, IVs, assorted generic blood pressure and diabetic meds. He had a printed handout that covered every drug that he gave me prescriptions for and included the condition, precautions, interactions, dosages and so forth. He recommended one particular medical supply house that keeps a complete stock on hand to fill his prescriptions, pre-packed no less.”

“What else is in it?”

“Bandages, tape, blood clotting bandages, Ace wraps, tape, gauze, gauze pads, burn treatment products, antivirals and things like Sudafed, laxatives, anti-diarrheal, Benadryl, mild tranquilizers and more. Read the list, I can’t remember everything included. He said the core element was a top line expedition sized trauma slash first aid kit. He did say that it would take us a few hours to read through the instructions pertaining to suturing and the like. He said some of the techniques outlined are best left to trained professionals if available. That said, he went on to say that a professional might not be available and we should use the included training material to practice.”

“You making me watch William’s delivery helped. I might be able to handle a normal delivery, if necessary. I’m not so sure about a breech delivery.”

“Given a choice, I’d prefer not to find out.”

“Ok, we’ll get the meat tomorrow and whatever else on your list. Keep back enough to pay for the medical stuff.”

“Oops, I think someone has a dirty diaper or is hungry. We can pick this up later.”

I should mention how I came up with Silence is Golden. I was born in 1981, so I’d never heard the song that I know of. Clyde was of the earlier generation and had the full set of The Beatles, Roy Orbison, The Four Seasons and maybe a dozen more singers or groups. He later became fond of Country and had all of Marty Robbins and Johnny Cash, to name only two. Talk about dead memories. Of course Carolyn was the youngest of the three children and clearly Clyde’s favorite daughter. In truth, he’d helped both of her brothers in many ways since he really had the capacity.

Getting the extra money allowed me to go ammo shopping on the internet, after everything else was taken care of. I found everything that I was looking for at MidwayUSA which is located in Missouri. I’m not saying the price was right because I’d seen cheaper. However, cheaper means nothing if everything is backordered. I managed to fill all of

the holes except for two. They would have to wait until after because what I had in mind was pretty much only found on military installations. Keep in mind that some of that sniper ammo we used in the Barrett's in Iraq wasn't available to the public.

You couldn't say the same about other things; I'd seen an RPG-7 or two during my National Guard days. I'd also seen hand grenades including the WW II Pineapple through the Vietnam era M-61 and the ones we used, the M-67. We almost always had green smoke and red smoke within the squad plus either white smoke or Willy Pete. While Willy Pete is an incendiary, white smoke wasn't. Both put out a good volume of white smoke. The other difference is that white smoke doesn't explode while Willy Pete does. The green smoke indicated a cold LZ and the red smoke a hot LZ. They were mostly used in Med-Evac situations.

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"Did you give anymore thought to Daddy's gut feeling?"

"Thought, yes; I haven't reached any conclusions. I think the safe bet is to maintain our level of preps, even if it means replacing something before we start using it. We could probably squeeze 6 people in each bunkroom for a total of 14 people, but man, would it be close. The shelter is only 448ft<sup>2</sup> and 14 people would cut the space to 32ft<sup>2</sup> per person, gross. Plus I'm not sure the Excel composting toilet would handle 14 people for very long. It has a 2" vent with blast valve up against the outside wall plus a 1" drain with a pump to pump excess liquids to the septic line. The reason that there's so much room in front of the toilet is that you need 48" free space to remove the drawer. So, I just put in a narrow long space for the toilet with only the curtain to close off the space when in use."

"What you're saying is that there is really only room for our immediate family."

"Long term, yes. Short term, say two days, we could handle as many as would fit. Of course, if push came to shove, there's Dad's old camping toilet. It's a pair of legs supporting a ring that holds a plastic bag and it has a plastic seat. I think we could get by with those white kitchen bags in a pinch. I saw it on the shelves in the basement."

"Ok, we'll keep that on the back burner, just in case."

"Now, I don't want to seem ungrateful...but why did Clyde buy me a Springfield Armory Super Match?"

"You like it, right?"

"I sure do. It's much more accurate than my FAL. I half figured he'd want the FAL to cover part of the cost of what he spent."

“You never know when you might need another rifle. Mom said that he was going to buy 3 of those Ruger SR-556s and 3 Browning Hi-Power pistols for the kids.”

“He knows something we don’t? We have William and are expecting our second, so why three?”

“Maybe good things happen threes too.”

On her third doctor visit after the initial confirmation of the pregnancy, he listened for the baby’s heart and then insisted on an ultrasound. Carolyn was really pregnant, twins, both girls. Obstetric sonograms (ultrasound) can only determine the sex of the fetus after 12 weeks gestation and she was around 14 weeks post conception.

“It’s twin girls!!”

“Any problems?”

“He didn’t say so. Must not be.”

It was Valentine’s Day, 2013. Our new President, a member of the newly formed Tea Party had been sworn in on January 20, just like always. Barack Hussein Obama didn’t get the change he wanted and by the time the election polls were open, his popularity numbers were approaching single digits. But polls being polls, it wasn’t really a landslide. A landslide is generally where one candidate get 60% of the popular vote, but that’s not a hard and fast rule.

When Carolyn called to tell Trudy that she was expecting twins, Trudy said she’d be sure to tell Clyde because it would affect his plans. Trudy didn’t explain what she meant. We found out the next weekend when they showed up, sort of unannounced. By that I mean I wasn’t expecting them but Carolyn was. Anyway, Clyde asked to get my appliance caddy, he had some heavy stuff in the pickup for us.

“How many cases of ammo did you buy?”

“Well...24,000 rounds of SS-109 5.56x45mm M855A1, 8,000 rounds of 124gr Lawman and 4,000 rounds of 124gr +P Gold Dot. I figured you’d want to start them on a .22 so I got 4 Marlin Golden triggers and 2 cases each of solid point, hollow point and hyper velocity. There’s also 8,000 rounds of 250gr .45 Colt and 8,000 rounds of .45-70-405. Weapons wise, I got 4 Hi-Powers, 4 Ruger Vaqueros in .45 Colt with the 5½” barrels, 4 of those Mossberg 590A1 SPXs, 4 of the SR-556s, 4 of the Marlin 1894 Cowboy in .45 Colt and 4 of the 1895 Cowboys in .45-70. Might as well spend the money before...well, you’ll see soon enough.”

“What about magazines?”

“Each Hi-Power has the included magazine plus 8 more. There are 25 of the Ruger magazines for each SR-556.”

“Sure going to fill up the gun cabinet.”

“The longer we stand around yapping, the longer it’s going to take to get everything down to your basement. First things first. Oh, I bought the ACOGs for the SR-556s.”

“Forget anything?”

“No, there are suppressors for the Hi-Powers and the SR-556s. Same brands as before. I did get something in the way of ammo for Carolyn’s Tac-50. You know that the military has been using the Mk211MP for a few years now. They also developed a match cartridge designated the M1022.”

“I know about those. It’s on my post event list of things to get.”

“It just so happens that there’s this guy I sort of half know who got into a serious bind financially. Anyway, he had access and I got all I wanted for \$4 a round. I got 2,400 of each. Carolyn can change the sighting on her rifle with 10 rounds or less and both cartridges shoot to the same point of aim.”

“Been to Flagstaff have we?”

“Not me, he delivered. We’d better get a move on before I end up needing to replace the springs on my truck.”

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“Does your Daddy own a bank?”

“A few shares. He inherited a lot from Grandpa. It was all invested in the best investments at the time and he didn’t cash it out. Early on, he just plowed the dividends back into more stock. Later, he started to invest in technology. Things like Intel and Microsoft. When it appeared to him that someone was coming out with a better widget, he’d cash out and buy into the latest and greatest. He’s no Bill Gates or Warren Buffett, but he’s done fairly well.”

“I married into money?”

“It’s not something that I talked about because I wanted my man to want me and not my money. I don’t have much of my own, actually. However, a substantial portion of what Mom and Dad have is in precious metals. Daddy works because he wants to, not because he has to. The metals are divided up into three equal portions and there are no records of ownership. That portion of the estate, when it becomes an estate will simply

disappear. What's left in the property and investments will be subject to estate taxes. They'll get their pound of flesh but not the whole cow."

"I was trying to find a way to bring this up and this is as good of a time as any. This thing with Daddy buying us this and that and the other thing has to stop. Don't get me wrong, I'm not ungrateful. Some of the things we needed we only have because of what he's done. Imagine how that makes me feel."

"Barry, I can get him to stop doing some things, but not others. For example, I can persuade him not to give you the McMillan Tac-50 he bought for you. But things that directly concern William, me and the twins we're going to have are beyond even my control."

"He bought me a Tac-50?"

"It's paid for and should be ready soon. He also got more of the M1022 and Mk211 ammo to go with the rifle. I don't know how he managed, but he got both of us Jet suppressors. I don't see why, considering how loud the muzzle blast of the Tac-50 is, but he did it anyway."

"That's another ten grand not counting the ammo! That's exactly what I'm talking about Carolyn. Would I like to have my own Tac-50? Who wouldn't? The only 7.62x51mm rifle I could afford was that STG-58. He just up and gives me a Super Match with a top of the line scope. He gives us a propane tank 10 times larger than we probably could have found and filled it. Then after we managed to get a diesel tank, he added almost half of the fuel we have to the tank just so it was full. Add to that the four sets of firearms for our son, the twins we're expecting plus a spare set, just in case."

"He'll take them back but they'll just be put up and given to the children over the course of time for birthdays, Christmas or whatever. You don't understand my father. You have no idea how stubborn he is. Once he makes his mind up to do something, it is going to happen. Several of his gold and silver bullion purchases were so large that they were delivered by armored car. We not talking small amounts Barry...1,000 troy ounces is only 68½ pounds. Some of the deliveries were more on the order of 100,000 ounces total gold and silver, about three tons. He has an underground vault bigger than some banks containing precious metals and investment grade diamonds."

"I haven't been burning the wires up calling them and asking for things. I talk to my mother every weekend and things just come up in conversation. She tells him of our need or tells him what she expects him to do. The next thing I know, she's on the phone telling me to keep an eye open for this or that. She's my mother and I won't refuse to answer reasonable questions she asks."

"Sort of reminds me of some of the PAW fiction where the main character has more money tied up in preps than John Rockefeller had tied up in oil. How about this? We accept what they've provided so far including things purchased and not delivered. However, no more buying on our behalf without consulting us first."



"I'll let mother know. She has more influence over him than anyone else. I can't promise it will do all that much good, but I'll try. I do know what would get him to back off, if you're interested."

"I'm listening."

"True, but I doubt you'll like it. Ok, if you found a job in Tucson and we moved down there, he'd help us to get back to the same place we are now and probably stop. Kind of like a no fault move. We would end up with about the same as we have now, except probably more land so we had pasture for the horses. Three or four bedroom house, bomb shelter, probably aboveground, maybe a barn and grain silo."

"That brings up something else."

"What?"

"Those jobs the boss was bidding on...he didn't get any of them."

"And?"

"He told us that unless he can find another large job, he'll be forced to cut at least half of the staff. Maybe we should give some thought to Tucson."

"Only if you are positive that you want to do it. And Ruth said, *Intreat me not to leave thee, [or] to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God* (Ruth 1:16). I'm a wither thou goest kind of gal."

"Fair enough. Given a choice, what would you choose?"

"With three children, probably Tucson. All of my family lives there. I know the area. A lot of little things that are difficult to voice or explain."

"I'm willing to drive down there and take a look around. Maybe your father or brothers know of a better situation for the future. I'm going to sit down and have a long talk with your father, if nothing else."

"Next weekend?"

"Ok; let your mother know were coming down."

"There were several reasons for the trip. I needed to talk to you about some things. Carolyn and I discussed the possibility of moving down here and that's a second consideration. I didn't know you were wealthy, Clyde. I certainly didn't know that Carolyn came from a wealthy family."

“I was surprised when Trudy said you were coming down.”

“Would it have made a difference if you did?”

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 4

“Not to me, no. Admittedly, the way we first got together was a bit unusual, but in the end, I fell in love with her and proposed.”

“So what’s the big deal?”

“The big deal is every time I turn around Trudy and or you are helping us with something else. I’m not so sure that deal over the Cummins generator wasn’t something that involved you too. I’m not ungrateful...but it bothers me.”

“Did you listen to what you just said Barry?”

“What do you mean?”

“You only said us once; it was I this and I that, for the most part. My father was very successful. I was an only child. I had a very good education both in college and from my father. He taught me about investments; and, using what I learned in school and what he taught me, we’ve been more successful. Did she tell you about my private vault?”

“The subject did come up.”

“The underlying theory is buy low and sell high. Or, in some cases, hold. Precious metals and investment grade gemstones only increase in value over time, offsetting inflation. No one outside my family and the dealers know how much is in that vault. And none of the dealers know the total extent of our holdings. I use multiple dealers and pay in cash. Carolyn isn’t even current on our holdings because over time they change. We have quite a bit. All of the silver is .999 fine except for the 1964 coins. All of the gold is 22 carat. It’s mixed Krugerrands and Eagles. She will get one-third of the contents of that vault when Trudy and I are gone. I hope that most of it is held and used for the benefit of our grandchildren.”

“I was more concerned about things like the Super Match and the Tac-50. You spent a bunch of money acquiring things for the grandchildren. We don’t even know if we’ll have more than three children, but you bought for four.”

“Spares are a handy thing to have Barry. Before she met you, Carolyn was depending on her ability to get home. She and her mother had some long talks about you. For her part, it was almost love at first sight. She first bought the subject up that Thanksgiving and after we thought about it, Trudy and she had a long conversation at Christmas. You were stuffed and wrapped by then and everyone but you knew it. She’s our only daughter and we’ve never denied her anything. Fortunately, she’s a bit independent and never asked for much.

“You and she were given choices; help with your preps or a fancy wedding. The simple truth is, Trudy and I would have done both. We have the means to do things that the

two of you don't and we do them as a parental prerogative. The same applies to your children, our grandchildren. Does that cover it?"

"To a point, yes it does. It would be appreciated if you two would consider discussing some of the things you do for us with us before you do them."

"I'll think on it, no promises."

"The company I'm working for didn't get those big jobs he bid on. The subject of moving down here has come up. Jobs are getting difficult to find. What's the job market like in this area?"

"Tight. But if you know people, jobs are available."

"I'm afraid I don't know anyone in the Tucson area."

"You know us and we know people. It's just a door opener and nothing more. If you move, we'll help with getting you resettled. We did it for Robert and John. It's high time we did for our daughter."

"What kind of name is John Johnson?"

"One that's easy to remember how to spell."

"Do you happen to know of any construction companies that are looking for journeyman carpenters?"

"I know one that's looking for an assistant foreman for their framing crew. Just got a big contract that supposed to run 30 months."

"I wonder if that's the contract my boss lost out on?"

"I think it probably is. The question is why was he bidding on a contract in Tucson?"

"I didn't know that was where the construction site was."

"Big housing development to be built in five phases, fifty homes per phase."

"Carolyn said something about a no fault move."

"She did, did she? The way it works is you two find 40 acres or so in the area with an existing house. If it's missing a barn or grain silo, we'll add it. Same for the shelter. If it needs to be fenced, we'll fence it. We do 100% financing on the whole deal and when you sell your home where you live, you turn the proceeds over to us. We help with the move, probably just get a moving company to do a complete package including packing, moving and unpacking."

“What about the difference?”

“If the deal works out that you get more than you owe, you keep the extra. If it’s the other way and you owe more than you get, Trudy and I set it up as a loan and write it off yearly up to the gift limits until the debt is retired. We did the same for Robert and John when they were first getting started.”

“You do realize how uncomfortable all your charity makes me feel personally, Clyde. I never set out to do more than play my part in life. The very idea that I married money is disturbing. It’s difficult to identify my role in our immediate family due to that fact. I don’t feel that I have the right to come between my wife and her family although most of what you two have provided has made it easier to get our preparations to their existing level.”

“Charity? Is that how you see it?”

“To an extent, yes.”

“Son, you’re married to our only daughter and she’s very special to us. I’m sorry if you feel it’s charity because that was never our intent. The same will apply if you two do choose to move to the Tucson area and we help with that. By the way, which of you is the better shot?”

“We’re going to end up about even with our M1As. Can’t tell you yet about that Tac-50 you ordered for me. We should be close with all of our firearms given enough practice. I’m not partial to the M-16 or M-4 the way they’re issued. Keeping them clean is a lot of work. I think we’ll both try those SR-556s and see what we think. Might make for a very good CQC/CQB weapons platform.”

“Speaking of CQC, what do you have in your stash for those situations?”

“Nothing.”

“And what should you have for a CQC situation?”

“Breeching shells, concussion, flash bangs, CS grenades or other non-lethal ordnance.”

“Make up a list and I’ll see what we have or can get. Also make a separate list of what you do have. Let me get the guy’s name on that construction job and I let someone know that I might know of someone who might be interested. How long before you complete the current project?”

“Two months.”

“Let call a realtor I know; I’ll get her to looking for that land and house. I know of one or two places available.”

“Did you get everything worked out with Daddy?”

“He knows a company looking for an assistant foreman for a framing crew. That could be the outfit that underbid the boss. The boss never mentioned that the building site was Tucson.”

“What about the move?”

“He said they’d handle it the same way they did your brothers.”

“Good. Are you open to a suggestion or two?”

“I suppose so.”

“He’ll arrange to get you an interview, but it will be up to you to get yourself hired. Mom said she knew of 2 places, one with 40 acres and the other with 60 acres. The larger acreage has a 4 bedroom house with 2¾ baths, full basement, grain silo, barn and is completely fenced. She said all we’d need to do with that acreage is add the shelter. The other acreage only has a 3 bedroom slab house, no out buildings and it’s not fenced. Both have good wells and septic. They’re too far out for natural gas and use propane. They have commercial power and telephone. The larger has satellite TV but I don’t know about the other one.”

“How would we deal with the fuel tanks and fuel?”

“Have the tanks pumped out and the fuel transferred to the new tanks the acreage would have. We can either pull both fuel tanks or leave them for the next owner.”

“Are you familiar with either place?”

“I know the 60 but not the 40. It’s a nice house about 10-12 years old. Attached 2 car garage and detached 4 car garage and the building I mentioned. Given a choice, I’d go for the one I know best, the 60. The thing only you can decide is whether or not you want to stick with your current employer and chance not getting that assistant foreman position.”

“I’d hate to leave him this close to being finished with the construction project. I think he’d understand a move to be closer to your family since you’re carrying twins.”

“Make me the fall guy?”

“Would you really mind?”

“The benefits outweigh anything he might think. Are you going to go for the job down here or not?”

“I’ll ask your father to set up the interview.”

“Want to go look over the 60? Mom has the realtor’s number.”

“Sure, since we’re here.”

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The house was very nice and the former owners had been into the green revolution. The basement contained a custom rack holding 12 Surrette 8-CS-25PS, 8 volt 820 amp hour batteries with one 48 volt bank connected to the Schott ASE-300-DGF/50 300-watt RWE-Schott 48-volt solar panels mounted on the south facing roof through the charge controller. The second bank was powered by a 48v wind turbine through a second charge controller. Both battery banks supplied a Xantrex/Trace inverter setup. Apparently they didn’t use much commercial power.

“At the moment the grid tie system is feeding the excess power into the grid. They were serious about their system and used very good equipment. As you can see, half of the basement is finished and that fireplace is wood burning. There’s a fair amount of storage space in the unfinished half. That’s a  $\frac{3}{4}$  bath with stool, sink and shower. Let’s cover the main floor.

“This is the master bedroom with its own attached bath. As you can see, the walk-in closets are huge. That’s one of those spa tubs and there’s the shower. Two sink vanity. The large bath that serves the other bedrooms is over here. It has a standard tub and separate shower. The three bedrooms, as you can see, are larger than normal and have built-in desks. The closets are very large too.

“Now, this is the powder room, typical  $\frac{1}{2}$  bath with sink and stool. That fireplace over there is wood burning and shares the chimney with the basement fireplace. The dining room is through here. There’s room for a large table, sideboard and china cabinet. The kitchen is through here. Propane stove with oven. Two additional ovens mounted there. There is a trash compacter, a dishwasher and a microwave but no disposal. Not good for the septic system. Are you ready to check the out buildings?”

“Carolyn?”

“I’ve seen enough of the house.”

“That’s a Harvestore grain silo, about medium size. The barn was primarily setup for stabling horses and has a birthing area, stalls and so forth. The loft is full of hay with some straw for bedding. A later modification was made to provide for two milking stalls but it’s hand milking only. That large pen there was to be used for hogs, but they never bought any.

“The final addition was done just last year and it’s over here next to the barn. That’s a fenced area for chickens and a hen house. Between the solar and wind setups, there’s enough power for the home and all the out buildings. This is the only thing they didn’t get completed. Watch your step, the hole is open. That’s a Containment Solutions double wall fiberglass fuel tank, the largest they make. It’s anchored and partially plumbed. By that I mean the pumps and whatnot are installed. The generator you saw sitting in the barn is a Kohler diesel.

“His wife died of cancer and it just took the life out of him. I guess he just mourned himself to death. They have one child, a married daughter living in Los Angeles. She set the price and added OBO. I’ve got to tell you folks, that house by itself, was on the order of \$200,000 before improvements. The solar and wind probably cost another \$100,000. The other things were all paid for. Anyway, the property is free and clear. She just wants out from under and low balled the price. She’s asking \$300,000. With the housing market the way it is, she hasn’t had a single offer.”

“Two fifty, cash,” Clyde said.

“Come on Clyde, that’s probably only sixty percent of the value.”

“Reva, it’s not complete. There’s that tank to take care of and there’s no shelter.”

“But Clyde, what about the fencing, that was expensive.”

“Ok, two seventy five and not a penny more.”

“Let’s write up the offer and I’ll call her.”

“Clyde, we haven’t said whether or not we wanted it.”

“Doesn’t matter Barry. If you don’t want it, I’ll just finish it off and put it on the market. I can get an easy four hundred for the place. Reva mostly deals in residential and she doesn’t know the true value of this sixty with what’s on it.”

“Carolyn?”

“Please Barry?”

“Ok.”

“Clyde, I can call in sick if you can arrange the interview for tomorrow.”

“You have a resume?”

“Nope.”



“Honey, can you type one up for him?”

“Sure Daddy.”

“Now this guy prefers to hire veterans Barry. You did a tour in Iraq, right?”

“That’s right.”

“And you’re currently a foreman?”

“Right again. And you know I’m primarily a carpenter.”

“Five will get you ten you’ll be hired. If not, I know a couple of other people looking for experienced people.”

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The daughter accepted Clyde’s offer of two seventy five and he deposited the money in escrow while I was doing the job interview. I walked out with a new job and Reva said the escrow would be very short. Clyde asked us if he could do what he wanted for an above ground shelter. We agreed to let him go ahead. We returned late Monday and Tuesday morning I gave my boss two weeks’ notice.

The following day, we listed our home for three hundred. Trudy called to say that she had lined up a moving company and it was a turnkey package of packing, hauling and unpacking. She suggested we keep any really good furniture to furnish the shelter because they intended to furnish the new home if we would allow them to do so. We discussed it and since they asked first, we agreed.

Eight days later, the movers showed up and had everything packed in one day. The next day, the truck showed up and everything was packed in just a few hours. I left the QD 12.5 but we had the propane and diesel tanks pumped out. The fuel was hauled to Tucson and added to the tanks on our new place. Bob and Johnny brought up a flatbed and hauled our firewood. A local radio store took down my radio tower and we moved our own firearms and the contents of the shelter, less what we were leaving behind.

A month later, we got an offer on the old place of two seventy five. We’d clear around two fifty or a bit less after everything and decided to accept the offer. Meanwhile, Clyde had a contractor friend building our new above ground shelter. It was a monolithic dome with a foot of concrete sprayed over 4 inches of foam insulation and covered by 8 feet of earth. The radius of the dome was 20 feet permitting a second floor. The main floor had about 1,256ft<sup>2</sup> and the second floor maybe half of that. It also had a basement with an additional 1,256ft<sup>2</sup> of storage space which held the Koehler generator.

A commercial 10,000 gallon propane tank replaced the existing 1,100 gallon tank and held the contents of their old tanks, our tank and what Clyde ordered to finish filling it to

9,000 gallons. The diesel tank held our ~15,000 gallons plus an additional 25,000 gallons of the B-100 and was stabilized. We dutifully endorsed the check from the sale of the Apache Junction home and handed it over to Clyde and Trudy. His only remark was "close enough!"

Our old furniture was stored until the shelter was finished. I was busy starting the new job and had to leave most of the details to Carolyn and her family. The house was furnished in Ethan Allen furniture with a king sized bed in the master bedroom and full size beds in each of the other three bedrooms with top of the line mattress and box springs. There was a small gun safe in the master bedroom and another, larger safe in the shelter when it was finished. The 'children's rooms' also had cribs.

The moving company was owned by another of Clyde and Trudy's friends and apparently the guy was a prepper because nothing was said about the amount of ammo they moved from Apache Junction. The air purification system was much larger than what I'd installed and with the available space, the dome could easily house the entire Johnson family. Our location was only 2 miles from Clyde and Trudy's and 5 from John's. Robert was just the other side of Clyde, call it 2¼ miles.

"I have some things I'd like to store in the basement of your shelter, if you don't mind."

"No problem, what do you have?"

"Twelve new in the box NM M14s modified to semi auto only. Twelve new M16A1 rifles with the conversion to the gas piston, full auto capable. Twenty four M1911A1, also new, and they're not Government Issue. Another 6 model 870 combat shotguns, also new and of course a full corner of cartridges and shells."

"The basement is round, it doesn't have corners. What, you don't have a Ma Deuce lying around somewhere?"

"Gonna keep them at our place. The demolitions are stored there too, in a bunker along with the belted .50 caliber ammo and belted 7.62."

"Real machine guns?"

"If they weren't real, I wouldn't need the ammo Barry. You won't need to go to Flagstaff if anything happens; I have everything we'll ever need and then some. Each family, except yours has one Tac-50. I got a second for your family since you have infantry training. Over the years, I've been able to accumulate a few things. We have both model of the LAWs, M-72A2 and M136 AT-4. Don't have any of those Javelin missiles because they cost too much. 'Sides, never thought we'd have to go up against an Abrams.

"The ammo, except for the shotgun shells, is all Lake City, on strippers in bandoleers in cans. All dated after 2001. I own a store that deals in class three arms and that's why you have some of the things you do. 'Course some of the stuff I have and every mem-

ber of the family have is flat out illegal for a civilian to own. When you have the cash, you'd better have Carolyn order more from Walton. I'd recommend you bring your stores up to enough for 6 people for five years. Trudy and Carolyn have been discussing a few minor additions to your grocery supplies 'cause of the children."

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"Clyde said you'd been talking to Trudy about adding a few groceries."

"It's mostly baby food Barry. I've already figured out the Walton order and Mom and Daddy are paying for it all and we have to pay them back. Before you get all in a hissy fit, we're ordering a full truckload and it will be divided four ways. Robert and Johnny have to pay them back too. We're moving the horses over next weekend. Daddy had them trucked down from the Phoenix stable. The grain in the silo has been replaced. Isn't the grass coming up nice?"

"Yes it is, irrigated? He wants to store some stuff in the basement of the shelter."

"Yes, it's irrigated. Mom mentioned the extra guns and ammo. Those M14s were all built by TRW. They're some of those National Match versions they built around 1964. The handguards were replaced with current issue and Leupold scopes added. The M16s are new uppers on A1/A3 lowers and are customized for accuracy and range. They're guaranteed sub MOA accurate to 500 meters, but actually tested out accurate to 600 meters with Match ammo. They're equipped with the ACOGs. The ammo has been subject to limited handling, coming directly from Lake City to here and stored.

"I assume he told you about the bunker where he has the explosives stored. If he got caught with some of that stuff, they weld the door on his cell shut. Nothing about what he has is known outside the family. You do know that he's a class three dealer?"

"He mentioned it."

"He deals with certain law enforcement agencies and things that he doesn't have on one of the acreages are available in his vault in the store."

"Do you know why he built our shelter so large?"

"It's the best of the shelters the family has. The acreage is also the largest. I'm not sure why he built what he did but each that was built was the latest design at the time. I wouldn't be surprised if he doesn't build another like it at their place and use the older shelter as secure storage."

"He's never explained that gut feeling, did your mother say anything about it?"

"She said that was the reason for the Walton order. When I asked what she meant, she said soon."

“Ok, soon; but what soon?”

“She didn’t know and Daddy hasn’t said.”

“And, how soon is soon?”

“Knowing Daddy, within a year. I’m not sure he knows what’s going to happen. I do know that he correctly predicted Katrina and Rita. He also seemed to know ahead of time about Mt. St. Helens according to Mom.”

Mt. St. Helens had happened before I was born and since Carolyn was younger than me, before she was born. Robert had been a youngster and John a toddler according to Carolyn. I’d heard Robert mention some other events he’d predicted, the Sylmar and Northridge earthquakes. All of the events mentioned were natural phenomena so I suspected what that gut feeling pertained to was natural. Boy was I wrong.

When Carolyn was eight months into her pregnancy, she began to have a problem, pain in the lower abdomen. The doctor did another sonogram and immediately admitted her to the hospital. Clyde came by work to pick me up.

“What’s wrong Clyde?”

“Her uterus is thinning and he said if they waited it could rupture. He’s taking the girls by Cesarean section hoping to beat the rupture. He said the odds were 70-30 favoring him being able to complete it timely.”

“But isn’t it too soon for the girls to be born?”

“They’re eight months along, he said they would be small but would survive without too much problem. They can now handle preemies down to about 25 weeks. They’ll be small but that’s all.”

When we got to the hospital, Trudy, Robert and John were there. It had been decided that it was better for their wives to remain home for the children. Carolyn was in surgery. It seemed like forever before the doctor came out. He had what I would describe as a grim smile on his face.

“The babies?”

“They fine, about four and one half pounds each. They’re in the neonatal unit. Your wife is in recovery. That’s the good news. She had an incomplete rupture of her uterus and she had her mother bring her in at the first sign of a problem. She had been experiencing Braxton Hicks and said something wasn’t right. The damage to her uterus was too severe; we had to perform a Cesarean Hysterectomy. Had there been a choice, we would have consulted you. You should be able to see her in about an hour. You can see

the babies now but they can't be handled just yet. The nurses will attempt to express your wife's milk if possible."

We went to the prenatal unit and the nurses wheeled the incubators over. The baby girls appeared to be pretty much fully formed, just small. The nurse said they were doing fine but they'd had to resort to bottle feeding.

When we learned Carolyn was out of recovery and in a private room, we got in line to see her. I got to go first.

"I'm sorry."

"For what? They're beautiful. They will have to stay here for a short time, but so will you. Thank you for realizing you were having a problem. You were lucky you caught it. Three children are plenty. I only have two arms anyway."

"Are you sure it's ok?"

"I don't lie. I was terrified we'd lose you."

"They'll have to be bottle fed."

"I heard. Your mother is waiting outside with Clyde, Robert and John. I'll be back as soon as you see each of them. Don't overdo it."

"You can go in now Trudy. Clyde, a word please. It appears obvious that you overbought the firearms for the kids, we won't be having any more. Carolyn feels really bad so maybe you can do your best to cheer her up. I can stay the day and until the end of visiting hours, but I have to get back to work tomorrow or risk losing the job."

"I can fix that for you Barry."

"I really need the money and they really need me there. If someone can be here with Carolyn during the day, I can come in the evening after work. Hey, where's William?"

"Robert's wife Trish has him; he's fine. Either Trish or Jan will take care of William for you and help out once Carolyn comes home."

Trish was her nickname. Her full name was Patricia. John's wife Janice always went by Jan. Robert didn't like to be called Bob but John didn't mind Johnny from family members. Clyde mentioned that they'd just begun excavation for their new dome. It was to be identical to ours. He went on to say that he was going to make the original shelter available to his new hired man and his family.

He then explained that the new man had been raised on a horse ranch and had attended an accredited farrier school. He'd be responsible for most of the work taking care of

the herd. He also said that the two sows and boar had been delivered that day and the cattle would be coming the next day. He hoped I knew how to hand milk because the cows were fresh and would be artificially inseminated by the vet soon. He said he hadn't found a bull he liked, yet. We'd gotten the pullets the previous week and they'll begin laying eggs in a few weeks. We could sell whatever eggs the family didn't take. He figured that they could use most of the milk. What they couldn't would be turned into cheese.

I had to admit I'd never milked a cow before but he said he'd teach me. He'd also tend with the stock until Carolyn was home with the twins from the hospital. I was about to the point of simply screaming, everything had happened so fast over the past few weeks with us moving, my changing employers, Carolyn's current situation, ad infinitum.

You recall he said he didn't have any FGM-148 Javelin missiles? He could afford them even though the reusable launcher assembly cost \$125,000 each and the missiles cost \$80,000 each. He didn't believe we'd need to go up against anything harder than and UA HMMWV. And speaking of HMMWVs, he had four of the 2006 H-1 Hummer Alphas stored on blocks in his storage building. They had 6.6 L turbo Duramax LLY V8 turbo diesel engines with the 5 speed Allison 1000 transmissions. For collectors, the most desirable model is the H1 Alpha, produced in the final model year of 2006. It had the most powerful engine and the best fuel mileage of the H1 vehicles. Overall, the H1 was a very limited production vehicle. Each of the vehicles had less than 1,000 miles on the odometer. They were a whole lot better than the ones we had in Iraq.

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Do you get the impression that good ol' Clyde was preparing for WW III? That was just one of what he said were infinite possibilities. They had what they had, just in case. He said if whatever it was didn't happen during his lifetime, it might still happen during ours. There was nothing wrong with the TRW NM M14s and they'd be just as good in another fifty years as they were now. The ammo might or might not go bad, but the weapons would last until they were 'used up'. I think Clyde was a Star Trek fan too.

Clyde had a shooting range set up at Robert's. It included a 50 meter pistol range, a 1,000 meter rifle range and a trap course. Pistol targets could be set at 3 meters, 7 meters and at varying ranges out to 50 meters. The rifle range had target stands at 100 meter intervals starting at 100 meters and ending at 1,000 meters. The trap course featured 2 launchers. Since the majority of the shotguns had 20" barrels, Clyde had 6 Remington 11-87s with a full set of RemChokes. He didn't allow his money to be idle. It was either invested in very lucrative investments or in hardware of one sort or another. I have no idea where the vault was located. Carolyn knew but wouldn't tell me, reminding me that Silence was Golden. Right, honey; in more ways than one.

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 5

She and the twins came home after a 4 week stay in the hospital. Clyde insisted and when my health insurance wouldn't pay for more time, he paid it out of his pocket. Well, I assume he wrote a check, but we didn't have any balance when Carolyn and the babies came home. Clyde then hired an LPN 'to help out'. It was good that I had more time to spend with William. However, Clyde decided to call him Billy Boy and I was forced to compromise with Billy. It took a while but I finally got Clyde to do the same.

Meanwhile, the order from Walton had come in and been distributed. Clyde and Trudy had over ordered a bit but with the new hired man there was even a five year supply for the three members of his family. His wife was a school teacher teaching in a nearby elementary school. Clyde had a single wide mobile home installed.

Robert's degree was in mechanical engineering and John had an MBA. Clyde was an Aeronautical Engineer currently working for Universal Avionics but his main interest was raising horses and caring for his family. He said he should have been an Electrical Engineer. However Bombardier Aerospace also had a Tucson facility and he thought that might be a possibility.

Do you also recall my saying 'boy was I wrong'? If you've been following the timeline, the world didn't end on December 21, 2012. The date is later, obviously, because the twins have been born. It's now the day after Christmas 2013.

We discussed it and, since Carolyn was up to it, decided to have a New Year's Eve Party for the family. I made a run to a liquor store and picked up the liquors Carolyn recommended along with a bottle of Maker's Mark and a bottle of Jack Daniels Single Barrel along with some moderate priced champagne and assorted mixes. The item I bought the most of was Jose Cuervo 1800. I bought 2 fifths of Bombay Sapphire Gin, a bottle of Grand Marnier for the Margaritas. What else? Absolute Vodka in case James Bond showed up, a bottle of sweet vermouth and a bottle of dry vermouth, Crown Royal and Angostura bitters for Manhattans and a case of beer for the football games. I dropped a pretty hefty piece of change.

Carolyn had a variety of appetizers including Little Smokies in barbeque sauce, various hors d'oeuvres and four kinds of cheese. Everybody had eaten a light dinner before the party which began around 9. I'm not much for mixing cocktails or mixed drinks and just set out everything on the kitchen counter and had the mixes on ice in the sink. I tried one of the fancy Margaritas and then switched to some Single Barrel on the rocks. We had the TV on mute in the background watching the Times Square party and countdown. When the ball dropped, we turned up the volume and watched the ball drop.

"Whew, that had me going."

"What had you going, Clyde?"

“I was afraid some terrorist might set off a dirty bomb when the ball hit at midnight.”

“We would have known. That happened two hours ago. You know how all of the MSM acts when some little thing happens...we interrupt all programming to bring you breaking news’...”

“I guess you’re right Barry. I think that’s enough of the mixed drinks for me. Maybe I’d better switch to a beer. What brand did you buy?”

“Coors.”

“You don’t have a MGD in your fridge?”

“I just might, let me check.”

“Lucky man, I had 3 cans.”

“One will be more than plenty, thanks.”

“Anyone want coffee? I think maybe I’ll put on a pot,” Carolyn asked.

All the ladies wanted coffee and my drink was about gone so I told her to count me in. Robert took a MGD and Johnny took a Coors. Nobody had much to drink and I’d been nursing a little Single Barrel on the rocks most of the evening. It appeared we could host a New Year’s Eve party the next year without buying more than some beer for the football games on New Year’s Day.

Come Super Bowl Sunday, we’d get together somewhere, but a case of beer would be more than enough. I could take some of my Coors and either Clyde or Robert could buy the MGD. We’d never driven down for the party before because I always had to work the next day. We discussed the bowl game the next day and agreed to meet at Clyde and Trudy’s because they had a 40” flat screen HDTV. Carolyn and Trudy packed up the leftover snacks for Trudy to take home with her. She’d add a couple other things which would be good to go for the bowl crowd invasion. It wasn’t the same since the NCAA started switching dates. Times change.

And, truth be told, I’m not that big of a fan. I sort of got stuck on Notre Dame and watched all of their televised games, but few others. Basketball was a different situation and I watched a game most Sunday’s. I was partial to the Celtics and the Lakers.

I’d have to be back to work on Thursday and Friday. New Year’s Day 2014 was a Wednesday. Carolyn said we wouldn’t be able to stay all day because she wasn’t up to it. She’s had her share of depression since the twins were born. It wasn’t post-partum blues, but depression because of the hysterectomy. She was coming out of it slowly...what was done was done and it hadn’t been anything the doctor felt he had a choice



over. If he'd have asked, I'd told him Carolyn was more important than additional children.

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Around about late March, 2014 Anak Krakatau was raised from orange to red indicating a pending eruption. The last time a major eruption occurred there was 1883 when Krakatau had an explosive eruption that registered 6 on the VEI scale. Anak Krakatau was a new volcano, Anak meaning 'son of '. Clyde said this wasn't what was bothering him, exactly. Whatever it was, he now concluded, was volcanic but not Anak Krakatau.

"Redondo Peak is growing, Barry. That's awful close."

"What or where is Redondo Peak?"

"It's the resurgent dome in Valles Caldera. It's located just west of Los Alamos, New Mexico. It hasn't had an eruption for about 60 thousand years and seemed to be dormant. According to the USGS and others, there is still some minor underground activity. About two years back, Redondo Peak began to grow."

"And?"

"And, the one in southwestern Colorado, La Garita, hasn't erupted in 25 million years. It had a VEI of 8 and is classified as an extinct Supervolcano. The eruption that created the La Garita Caldera was, perhaps, the largest known explosive eruption in all of Earth's history."

"Is it doing anything?"

"I don't really know. I haven't heard anything indicating that it's active or going active. However, both Long Valley and Yellowstone have some level of activity. Long Valley is still killing trees and there was that swarm about four years back at Yellowstone. Since Redondo Peak is growing, I think we're in for a period of significant volcanism. Just thinking about it seems to settle my gut."

"What, the earth is growing restless?"

"Couldn't put it better myself. Alaska and Hawaii have significant activity on a continuous basis. The Cascade Range seems to be coming more active. There's that locked portion of the Cascadian subduction zone. You can't narrow your thinking to just a small time period. You should be looking at the last decade or so; maybe starting with the 2004 Tsunami. That was a shade over 9 years ago. Since then, the planet has been active and it's getting restless. That thing in Haiti was only four years ago. Lots of activity around the Pacific Rim."

"But, I still don't see anything major to worry about."

“Try this on for size. Cascadia slips unlocking that large locked area. The earthquake would destroy Seattle and trigger at least some of the volcanoes in the Cascade Range. The San Andreas is sort of an extension of Cascadia. So Cascadia triggers not only the Cascade Range but the San Andreas and California has the ‘Big One’. The USGS says that’s due soon anyway. Specifically, to the south, just off of Cape Mendocino in California, it intersects the San Andreas Fault and the Mendocino fault zone at the Mendocino Triple Junction.

“Take it further and assume that the ‘Big One’ triggers Long Valley. With all that activity, Yellowstone is bound to react. While La Garita might not go, there’s no reason to believe that Valles might not go. Can you imagine the amount of volcanic ash there could be in the air?”

“When we talked about it before, you said 3,030mi<sup>3</sup>.”

“I did. It would be more if the Cascade Range and Valles let loose.”

“Nah, maybe one of those might happen, but not all at once.”

“Don’t be in a rush. Say someone decides to go to war with the US. Like China. And, for kicks and giggles decides to target geological formations like the San Andreas, New Madrid or Yellowstone.”

“We’re not at war with China.”

“Taiwan is voting again on independence. If they vote yes, China will attack...they’ve said so. And if they attack, the US will defend Taiwan...we’ve said so. Care to rethink your position?”

“Not really, Taiwan had those elections in 2008 and the party friendly to mainland China is in power.”

“Think that will last?”

“I don’t know.”

It was an interesting discussion that got us nowhere. It was a lot of ‘what if’s’ and hypothetical’s. Yes, there was quite a bit of activity around the Pacific Rim. Yes, there was a red level warning about Anak Krakatau. And in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the USGS did say that it appeared that the ‘Big One’ had a high statistical probability of happening within the next 30 years.

The death toll from Haiti relating to the 2010 earthquake did approach the death toll for the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, and some claimed it surpassed it. AP said during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February, 2010 that the death toll for Haiti was estimated at 250,000 (US

estimates are 85,000 maximum). Wiki said the death toll for the Boxing Day tsunami was 230,000. The worst disaster ever might have been an earthquake in China in 1556 that killed 830,000. However, there was one in Syria during 1202 with a death toll of 1.1 million including deaths from disease and famine.

A global thermonuclear war could eventually kill 75-80% of the world's 6.802 billion inhabitants (US Census Bureau estimate as of 11Feb2010. The world's population was expected to reach 9 billion sometime between 2040 and 2050. There's an idea, wait to have the war until there are 9 billion people and the death toll will exceed the current world's population. That's only another 25-30 years away. By then, there will probably be 20 nuclear powers with even more nuclear weapons and even more grudges.

Earthquake probabilities for the US? I looked at a recent map and the earthquakes shown were in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana and Utah. Isolated instances elsewhere included Chicago, New Madrid, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. Alaska had the most and there weren't many near Yellowstone, during that week.

My average drive time to work was 20 minutes and that was in heavy traffic. If Clyde were right about something bad happening within the year, there were a few things to get around. First were BOBs for Carolyn, Billy, Sara, Margo and me. One in my pickup and 4 in the car. No, not the '57 Chevy, the new Suburban that her Daddy bought her for her birthday. He must have used the specifications from one of Jerry's stories and had it converted. It had everything except windows you could roll down. Well not the paint scheme from 'The Hermit', but everything else including those ash fans on the windows. It had the big diesel engine with the turbocharger, too. It didn't have the strange rear door, though. Bucket seats in front, bench seat in the second row with three child restraint seats. No third row, but you could lift up the cargo panel and access her armory. She had the same BOB and same GOOD bag. There was a duffel bag with things for Bill, Sara and Margo.

I don't know where she came up with Margo...maybe the Superman movie. But if that's true, she misspelled Margot. But back to the Suburban...it was just like the one Jerry described except for the windows which didn't lower and were of the same heavy Lexan as the windshield and rear window. No Jerry cans on the rear door but the built in diesel tanks were larger and it had a 6" lift. We still had the Chevy but she had it listed on EBay at a reserve price no one in his/her right mind would pay. Anyway, we made me up a GOOD bag just like hers and my BOB was mostly modified to match hers except for the changes of underwear. I took an extra pair of socks, boxers and T-shirt instead of panties and bra.

Carolyn very slowly came out of her funk over not being able to have more children. The LPN helped while she recovered physically and her mother and two sister-in-laws helped emotionally. Her getting that Suburban from Daddy really did the trick, if the truth were known. She knew and Clyde knew and I was pretty sure. Then when some idiot paid her reserve price on EBay for the '57 Chevy in American gold Eagles she was fully recovered. She gave the half of the one ounce Eagles to Clyde and he exchanged them

for one tenth, one quarter and one half ounce Eagles. She put half in her GOOD bag and the other half in mine. Between you and me, I'd have preferred a belt that held the coins, but there were just too many.

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We were just finishing up phase 2 of the project when Yellowstone experienced another swarm of quakes. The following week, the week after Thanksgiving 2014, they had a 6.3 on the New Madrid Fault Zone. That was on Tuesday; and on Thursday, one week after Thanksgiving the USGS announced the Resurgent Dome in Long Valley had risen 1.6 meters (63").

I'd like to think we'd have been ok if Anak Krakatau hadn't had an explosive eruption. But when that happened, that subduction zone responsible for the Boxing Day tsunami let loose and the planet let out a groan they probably heard on Mars or Jupiter. Anyway, the Hawaiian volcanoes began pouring out massive amounts of lava and the new island that had been forming under the Pacific made its first appearance. Alaska went outright crazy and Mt. Etna in the Med erupted, again.

Carolyn made it a point to stay at home or at her folks. I had to work, but wore my Oregon Scientific WR602 programmed for 304019, one of the Pima County stations. It was the station that covered both our home and my work. Carolyn wore hers as religiously as I wore mine. So, when Cascadia let loose destroying Seattle and a fair portion of the coast from Vancouver to northern California and triggered several of the volcanoes Cascade Range into erupting and helped the San Andreas and Hayward faults to shift, we both heard about it at the same time.

Because Clyde had a business band repeater on one of the local mountains and our vehicles had business band, SSB CB and ham radios, we went with channel one on the business radios. I was moving back home as fast as traffic would allow and John, Robert and Clyde along with the hired man were securing the livestock. Carolyn went home and got Billy out of his car seat and then unstrapped the girls and the four of them headed to the shelter. She put the 3 in the play pen and headed to the house to empty the refrigerator and move it to the refrigerator in the shelter.

When I got home everything was done and I parked the pickup with the Suburban. There was no visible sign of any of the disasters Nature had wrought...not yet anyway. Had any of us known the long term effects, it's possible that we wouldn't have gone into the shelter. At that moment, we didn't know...I didn't know...nobody knew what the future would bring.

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"Did you have any problems getting home?"

"Just traffic. You?"

"I needed three arms for a minute getting all three in from the Suburban. I put them in the play pen so I could empty the fridge. You'd have thought I'd abandoned them. I just now got them settled down. I heard the NWS announcement, but I can't imagine how much ash it will bring."

"Your father and I talked about once. I told you didn't I? Anyway, we sort of calculated that if Yellowstone and Long Valley let lose, we could get up to 3,030mi<sup>3</sup> of ash. I'm not sure how much of that we'd get this far south. It's a good thing we ordered another Baby Scrape CBRN. We'll have one for each of the girls and the Scrape CBRN 30 for William."

"Daddy has several cases of the filters and some children sized masks. Do we have time to go after them?"

"You call and tell them I'm on my way. Wait, what about the livestock?"

"They're taken care of...John came over before he went home to get theirs under cover."

"Ok, tell Clyde I'm on my way."

"Here you go, 3 adult masks, 3 children masks and two cases of CBRN filters. I figure with the wind speed, we'll get ash from Long Valley any time after 48 hours. I looked up the distance on that 'how far is it' website. It is 556 miles from there to here and the heading from there to here southeast, 128°. The prevailing wind is out of the west but I don't think that matters much, considering everything going on. Do you have spare filters for the shelter?"

"I don't know, do we? We didn't buy any that I know of."

"Ok, I had American Safe Rooms do the calculations because their unit is good for 3,500 cubic feet. The volume of the dome is one half of four thirds times pi times the radius cubed; in this case, 16,755ft<sup>3</sup>. The basement is easier because it's a cylinder. That formula is pi times the radius squared times the height; in this case, 12,556ft<sup>3</sup>. Add the two together and the total is 29,321.5ft<sup>3</sup>. That's why you have 9 units in the basement of your shelter."

"Nine?"

"Yeah and I bought the fancy one that costs \$3,800 each and supplies air for protected spaces up to 3,500 cubic feet (99 cubic meters) holding up to 12 occupants . However, since the volume is more than the number of occupants, they suggested going with the volume. They have an Israeli unit that one single unit would supply enough air for up to 100 persons and certainly would match the volume. The problem is that you have to pay shipping and if you have to go to manual, it takes 4 people. It cost \$18,117 plus ship-

ping from Israel. However, I ordered 18, 9 for thee and 9 for me and got a volume discount. They sold me the 18 units for about what the two Israeli units would cost with shipping. Plus they're in Oregon, hence no sales tax. Anyway I got the smaller units with the filters that are cheaper to replace and if you have to, one person can operate one of them manually."

"What's that got to do with the filters?"

"I know they put in a set in all of the units because they come complete with filters. Trudy asked if I ordered spare filters and I told her no. So, I ordered 18 sets of spare filters."

"And?"

"She ordered 18 sets of spare filters too."

"How much is one set of spares?"

"\$700, \$12,600 for a dozen and a half. Anyway I didn't know if she gave the eighteen she ordered to Carolyn."

"I didn't, didn't you Clyde?"

"That answers that. Take 18 spare filter sets plus the 6 masks plus the 2 cases, ah make it 3 cases, of spare CBRN filters. I'll help you load."

"As long as I'm here, could I get some things out of your explosives bunker?"

"You ok having that stuff around the children?"

"It will be locked up in the spare storage cabinet I installed in the basement."

"Why'd you do that?"

"Because I noticed you installed one. Since we both have those oversized gun safes in the shelter, I figured you must have put it in for the explosives."

"Good guess. Ok, I made up a package, just in case. You got the whole nine yards, 2 dozen each fragmentation, concussion, thermate, plus a dozen each of the various colors of smoke and Willy Pete plus CS and OC. The 12 gauge is rubber batons, bean bags with the tails, and that kind with the rubber balls, 50 rounds of each. Let's do this stuff first and swing by the bunker for the rest."

"You said 48 hours to get here?"

"Yeah, why?"

“Make that 47. I’ll bet my supper is cold too.”

“You ok on .50BMG?”

“We have the Hornady Match with the A-MAX 750gr slugs, the M1022 and the Mk211MP; fifteen hundred apiece of the first and twenty four hundred apiece of the second and third. Probably run out of barrel before we run out of ammo.”

“And you’re good on food?”

“You have no idea. Hell, I might even run over and pick up a couple more cases of Coors on the way home and some Everclear for our medical kit.”

“Grab those six packs of Master locks, they all use the same key and you better lock down the barn, the Harvestore and your home. Vehicles in the attached or detached garage?”

“Attached.”

“Lock them up too. I’ll get my ATV and show you to the bunker.”

“See that pile of small bales?”

“Yeah?”

“They conceal the bunker entrance; give me a hand moving them.”

Low and behold, the bales were cover for a tarp and the tarp the steel entrance to the bunker. Clyde had a remote and when he punched the button, one layer of the plate slid back over the second revealing a staircase. At the bottom of the stairs was a blast door which opened inward. He dialed the combination and pushed the door open, almost with one finger. He turned on the lights and pointed to some boxes with Carolyn’s name on them. We loaded the boxes and closed up the bunker. The tarp went back in place and the bales were moved back in place.

“Keep in touch. Use the business band radios. The CM units have 32 channels. Use the channel corresponding to the number of the date.”

“Gotcha. Anything else?”

“Take care of my daughter and grandchildren. Check in at 0800, 1200, 1600 and 2000. Trudy and I will be the command center for our family and Robert will be checking in at 0815, 1215, 1615 and 2014. John will be checking in at 0830, 1230, 1630 and 2030. I’ll be over in about 30 minutes to get 3 of the M14s and 3 of the M16s. I have the ammo and magazines. I guess I never introduced to Hans Gruber or his family. They’ll be in

our old shelter and he will be checking the stock. You should plan on checking yours and include the information in your 0800 and 2000 checking.”

“I’ll have the weapons ready. No M1911A1s?”

“Forgot those; yeah, 3 of those and 3 of the 870s.”

I knew that name from somewhere, but where? I was home and had everything unloaded and the firearms upstairs waiting for Clyde. Then, it hit me. Hans Gruber was the bad guy in Die Hard played by Alan Rickman. But Hans didn’t look anything like Rickman. When Clyde showed up I didn’t mention the coincidence.

“We’re in for some dark times with this much ash in the air. Stay safe and stay in touch following the schedule I gave you Barry.”

Clyde had no sooner left than the NWS radio broadcast another announcement; this one was just as brief, yet more inclusive. It included almost the entire country and Canada warning of ash clouds for a minimum of a week, with longer possible. Then the Specific Area Message Encoding kicked in with information relevant to the Tucson area. The ETA was 47 hours.

“It’s going to be a while; can we go back to the house?”

“Sure, I’ll carry Sara and Margo and you help William. What do you want from the shelter?”

“I’m not sure. I’ll get it. What were all of those boxes?”

“Two sets of replacement filters for the 9 air purifiers in the shelter basement.”

“Why nine?”

“The volume of the shelter is almost 30 thousand cubic feet. There are units big enough to handle the shelter. But, if something broke, it would take 4 people to manually run it. He said he got good pricing and went with the nine units because one person can power them.”

“We’re ok for power aren’t we?”

“Yes. We might not get power from the PV panels and we might have to lock down the wind turbine. In that case, we’ll either be on commercial power or the Koehler generator. Clyde said the tank is full. That’s 40 thousand gallons and we probably have years’ worth of propane. The generator is a 50REOZJB with a 4Q10W alternator putting out 208 amps prime rating 60 hertz at 120/240 volts. Depending on the load, it will use 1.6gph at 25% up to 4gph at 100%. My best guess is we’ll only use maybe 50% load so the usage is 2.4gph. We have enough fuel to run it 16,666.6 hours or just short of 2



years. There are drums of oil and cases of air, fuel and oil filters in the basement of the shelter. There're two empty drums to store the used oil and we can use the emptied drums to store the dirty oil after that. It has the sound enclosure with enclosed critical silencer and the exhaust is plumbed out through a pipe with a blast valve. The air intake also has a blast valve and includes a cyclone pre-filter."

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 6

“It must be good. Mom said Daddy bought the same model. The older generator had its own diesel tank and he added a new one for the new generator. I was supposed to tell you that he bought the ten year extended warranty.”

“Ok, and that’s all you brought?”

“No, we went by the bunker. I put those things in the basement cabinet.”

“It’s kind of neat how the contractor installed supports for the first and second story floors.”

“True, but it will make some things very difficult to do.”

Rather than posts, the contractor put a circular reinforced hollow shaft in the exact center of the dome. At the basement, main and second floors were doors opening outward allowing access to the space. Inside the hollow shaft were those steel stairs built off a central steel pipe. They’re called spiral staircases and a tight spiral stair with a central pole is very space efficient in the use of floor area. Nevertheless, the staircase/support shaft, which had 6” thick walls, was a cylinder with a radius of 3.5’ and a height of 30’. It used about 1,155ft<sup>3</sup> of the shelter volume. Not that it mattered; it was vented so a person could breathe inside the closed stairwell.

Because of the design, everything in the basement you couldn’t hand carry down had to be in the basement before the first floor slab was poured and almost everything on the second story had to be in place before the doors were hung and the stairs were installed. That explained why Clyde had the air purification systems, gun safe, generator, drums of oil and deep freezer put in before the first floor slab was poured. I had to take a knocked down cabinet down the stairs and assemble it down there.

Inside the shelter’s airlock, a pistol locker and a rifle rack had been installed for visitors’ to check their weapons. Double blast door, obviously; the outer door opened outward and the inner door opened inward. There was no problem getting almost anything you wanted into the main floor with both doors open. The problem was getting whatever from there to the second floor or basement. If it was wider than the staircase, it stayed on the first floor.

However...we only used the second floor and basement for storage. The food that wouldn’t fit on the second floor went into the basement. The basement had 1,256ft<sup>2</sup> and ample room to store the extra food, and the things mentioned earlier. There was even a reloading bench set up. It had a progressive loader I had no idea how to use and all the dies and whatnot for every caliber we used except for .50BMG. Clyde had the only .50BMG loader in the basement of his shelter. It was a RCBS Ammomaster .50 BMG. He had three bullets he could reload with: Hornady A-MAX 750gr, Raufoss and the new bullets used to load the M1022 cartridge. When I saw the reloading press, I asked about

it. Clyde said he'd teach me when we both had time. Meanwhile, we were to save all the empty brass. He also said that he thought we could reload the military brass more times than the Black Hills brass.

We were in the shelter well ahead of the ash. Although we went in 2 hours before it was expected to arrive, the ash's Timex quit ticking and it was late; a whole day late, to be specific. The wind had changed direction because of the low pressure area formed from the heat released by the volcanoes which pushed the stalled high to the east. The high's clockwise winds were replaced by the low's counterclockwise winds. So although the ash arrived late, more arrived than we'd have gotten from the high's winds.

As is typical in the case of a low pressure front, it was also a cold front. We kept up the radio check schedule and Clyde was visiting with some hams he knew in San Diego. They were operating on generator power because the earthquake had shut down both reactors and several conventional power plants.

"Clyde, Barry. Sixteen hundred hours check in. Still no ash; what's up?"

"Patience Grasshopper."

"My name isn't Kwai Chang Caine. Besides, he's dead and so are Master Po and Master Kan."

"You haven't noticed the barometer dropping?"

"Haven't looked."

"It's dropping indicating a low pressure front is coming in from the west. Temperatures will drop a little because of the cold front; however, the ash carried by the counterclockwise rotating winds will pull a lot of the ash down into our area blocking the sun. Don't be shocked to see snow mixed in with the ash. We could get more than the highest recorded snowfall."

"You're right, it is falling. Any idea how big the low pressure area is?"

"According to the Weather Channel, it's huge. It looked to me like it covered about two thirds of the country north to south. We'll get some from Long Valley, for sure. Yellowstone is a possibility and so is some of the ash from the Cascades depending on how fast the cold front moves."

"It should hit all of us around the same time, right?"

"Give or take 5 minutes, yeah. We won't be able to use any of the vehicles because of the ash in the air. We'll probably be moving around on horseback after the air clears up. Carolyn knows how to rig dust masks for the horses using an old sheet. The main prob-

lem will be to keep them from trying to graze and them ending up inhaling ash from the ground.”

“How’s your gut?”

“Better. I don’t think it’s over though. I could be wrong, you know. Still, there’s Valles to consider. For all we know, La Garita Caldera could be building up for some reason. Besides the San Andreas, there’s the New Madrid Zone.”

“Is the planet going nuts?”

“Maybe. I think it’s just going through a cycle. It appears that we’re in for an extended period of volcanic activity. Of course there is still the prediction that was made about Cumbre Vieja on Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. They hypothesized that during a future unascertained eruption, the western half of the Cumbre Vieja - approximately  $500 \text{ km}^3$  ( $5 \times 10^{11} \text{ m}^3$ ) with an estimated mass  $1.5 \times 10^{15} \text{ kg}$ , will catastrophically fail in a massive gravitational landslide and enter the Atlantic generating a so called ‘mega-tsunami.’ The debris will continue to travel – as a debris flow, along the ocean floor. Computer modeling indicates that the resulting initial wave may attain a local amplitude (height) in excess of 600 meters (1,969ft) and an initial peak to peak height that approximates to 2 kilometers (1 mi), and travel at about 1,000 kilometers per hour (621 mph – approximately the speed of a jet aircraft), inundating the African coast in about 1 hour, the southern coast of England in about 3½ hours, and the eastern seaboard of North America in about 6 hours, by which time the initial wave would have subsided into a succession of smaller ones each about 30 meters (98 ft) to 60 meters (197 ft) high. These may surge to several hundred meters in height and several apart but retaining their original speed. The models of Day et. al., and Ward and Day, suggest that it could inundate up to 25 kilometers (16 mi) inland. This would greatly damage or destroy cities along the entire North American eastern seaboard. The physical damage would take tens if not hundreds years to repair and restore. The economies of the countries affected would likewise take several years to return to the pre-inundation levels.”

“I saw the TV show. I didn’t believe it. Clyde, that’s a lot of mass to be moved and if I remember the program, it would be caused by a combination of magma and steam. Do you really believe magma and steam could cause a landslide that large?”

“We shall see what we shall see, Barry. What has me most concerned is the volume of ash in the air. If it were just one caldera exploding, maybe two, like Yellowstone and Long Valley have done, the sky would clear sooner rather than later. However, if there are a series of ongoing eruptions...over a period of years...we’ll have an ice age, regardless of global warming.”

“And the various plates will shift to reform Pangaea?”

“We won’t be around to see it. One complete Supercontinent cycle is said to take 300 to 500 million years to occur.”

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“Finally...I thought you’d never come to.”

“Where am I?”

“University Medical Center.”

“What am I doing here? How long...”

“Barry, you’ve been in a coma for forty-one days. The doctor said you might not remember what happened. Do I need to fill you in?”

“Start at the top. I’m Barry, you say? You are?”

“Your wife Carolyn.”

“Ok, I sort of remember. We have a son and twin daughters, right?”

“Right. Remember the children’s names?”

“William, Sara and Margo. What happened to me?”

“Car accident on the way home from work on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> of last year. The date today is Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.”

“Yellowstone? Long Valley? Anak Krakatau? What’s going on?”

“They had you on an EEG and said your mind was very, very active for a person in a coma. The doctor thought you might be dreaming subconsciously. None of the calderas have exploded. There has been no more activity on the New Madrid Fault Zone and California hasn’t had the big one.”

“Cumbre Vieja?”

“It’s still on Las Palmas in the Canary Islands and hasn’t collapsed. What have you been dreaming about? Can you remember?”

“Uh...Yellowstone and Long Valley erupted along with most of the volcanoes in the Cascade Range. Volcanoes all over the world were erupting and Clyde and I were talking on the phone about Cumbre Vieja collapsing.”

“You’ve been dreaming about disasters?”

“Nature was running wild and your father was predicting a new ice age. Can I have a drink of water, please?”

“I’ll have to hold the glass for you, you had an injury to your neck and have had limited mobility. The tests seem to show that you’ve regained most of your responses. Your spinal column wasn’t torn or anything, just bruised.

“I’m paralyzed?”

“No, you’ve are responding to stimulus but have a cracked vertebra in your neck. It seems to be healing. The doctor said you’d have some bad headaches from the concussion.”

“Anything else broken?”

“Not that I’m aware of. It will be a good month to six weeks before you can return to work, though. Daddy had a word with your employer and you’ll still have a job as soon as you can return to work. I’m afraid your pickup was totaled. Daddy went looking and found an H-1 Alpha with 27,000 miles on it. Everything was recovered from your truck and had been moved to the Hummer. I tried to drive it...that was an experience and it’s all yours.”

“What about the extras we had on the pickup?”

“They either been moved or replaced with something equal on the Hummer. He didn’t say where he found the Hummer but with the low mileage, he probably got it from some collector and paid a premium.”

“What color is it, Red?”

“Desert camouflage. Daddy had it repainted to match the four he has up on blocks.”

“But it’s the civilian version, right?”

“No gun turret nor uparmored. It’s the 2006 model like his four. He replaced the tires with some of his run flats and ordered replacements plus 2 extra for you.”

“Uh...anything happening anywhere we need to be concerned about?”

“Taiwan voted on independence, again.”

“And?”

“It carried. The PRC moved several vessels into the Formosa Strait and did a major increase of the missiles stationed on the mainland. A protest has been filed in the UN Security Council over the PRCs threat to invade Taiwan.”

“How many carriers do we have in the area?”

“Three on scene and a fourth underway, plus Fox reported that other naval assets were moved to the area.”

“Out of the frying pan and into the fire, huh?”

“I asked Daddy and he said that he doubted it would lead to war unless Taiwan refuses China’s warning to rescind the vote. They gave the Republic of China 90 days to think it over.”

“Now what?”

“Well, because of the family’s previous orders from Walton and Emergency Essentials, we have two more semi loads of food on the way. They built a berm around the barn and had all the silos topped off and several tons of hay and straw stockpiled. All of the radiation detection equipment was recalibrated. I had time so I updated and added to our medical supplies. I also ordered another 10,000 rounds of 168gr Federal match ammo for the M1As. In fact, I just about doubled all of our ammo supplies.”

“Fifty caliber too?”

“Yes, M1022 and Mk211MP. Plus I think Daddy restocked the bunker. Here’s the doctor.”

“How are we today?”

“I don’t know about you but my neck hurts and I have the Mother of all Headaches.”

“We removed the cervical collar 3 days ago based on the second MRI. We’ll get some physical therapy started to strengthen your neck muscles. If it goes well, you should be able to return to work in about 6-7 weeks. The first MRI showed minor bruising of your spinal column. However, our tests now show full responses to stimuli and you won’t have any lasting paralysis. You just have to get all those unused muscles back in tone. I’ll order Ibuprofen for the discomfort.”

“That bother’s my stomach. Why not Tylenol?”

“You need a NSAID. Can you take Aleve, Naproxen Sodium?”

“Same problem.”

“I’ll add Nexium to keep your stomach from over reacting.”

“Mom and Daddy are here. I’ll go get something to drink and a bite of food while they visit.”

“Where are the kids?”

“Trish and Jan are taking care of them. I’ll be back.”

“The hospital called and said you came out of the coma. You’re lucky you weren’t killed.”

“Carolyn didn’t describe the accident, just my injuries and the fact that my pickup was totaled.”

“A vehicle in the oncoming lane blew a tire and it was a head on collision. You tried to swerve and ended up more in the path.”

“The other driver?”

“Teenage girl. Had her seatbelt on and the car had airbags. Examined, held overnight for observation and released. Lacerations and contusions. Her father has good insurance and it’s covering your medical bills. We cleaned out your pickup and they paid us market value. I got you a used 2006 H-1 Alpha Hummer.”

“I heard. Heard you brought it up to the specs of my pickup and had it painted in Desert camouflage. What the deal with China and Taiwan?”

“The opposition to the current government managed to call for a referendum and it passed. China gave Taiwan 90 days to reconsider. I think that’s just to allow China to get in position to attack. We have 4 carrier strike groups on scene. The last arrived a few hours ago. They’re station keeping 200 miles east of Taiwan. Fox said we moved other assets into the region. I’m guessing submarines. The carriers are packed with Super Hornets and F-35C Lightning IIs.”

“What else?”

“The B-2s are on Guam, loaded for bear. The B1-B’s are on Taiwan with conventional loads. We’re at DEFCON 3. We ordered from Emergency Essentials and Walton, another truckload each. Tied up some loose ends, filled some holes and we’re ready if something happens. Now about your job...”

“Carolyn said you talked to my boss.”

“Yep, your job is secure. The doctor said you won’t be able to go back to work for at least 6 weeks. Personally...well...I wish you’d just give up the job and breed horses. You two have a good herd now and could make a good living breeding and training horses.”



“It might be moot, Clyde. Depends on what happens over Taiwan.”

“Either way, you’ll be fit in half the time Taiwan has to decide. Well, close anyway. What’s this about the EEGs?”

“Apparently I was dreaming. It was about Mother Nature doing her worst to destroy the human race.”

“That may be partially true.”

“What? Yellowstone?”

“No, an asteroid was spotted and tracking shows it may intercept the Earth’s path around the Sun just when the Earth is in that part of the orbit. They’re classifying it as a NEO. It’s one that Spaceguard missed. Kitt Peak National Observatory spotted it with their 4 meter Mayall telescope. The estimated time of arrival coincides with China’s deadline to Taiwan. The Arecibo telescope is now the primary tracking device although radio telescopes around the world are tracking it too and it’s being covered 24/7.”

“I’m not sure what’s worse, my dream or what’s going on now. Wait a minute, what about the B-52s?”

“All loaded out with 20 ALCMs internally plus 12 externally for a second strike if necessary. The rumor mill says that all the Tomahawk TLAM-Ns are deployed on the SSGNs and in the West Pacific. If it goes nuclear, expect every nation with a nuke to use them, lest they lose them.”

“Wouldn’t that be something?”

“What?”

“If a nuclear war broke out at the same time as the asteroid arrived. If it is big enough, it could cause a near ELE. Combine that with a war and it’s, Katy bar the door.”

“It’s about 5 kilometers long by 2 kilometers across and tumbling. There’s no way we can attack it and there isn’t time to send a mission to try and alter the course. We don’t have anything called Neptune and Russia doesn’t have anything called Peter the Great. I take it you’ve seen *Meteor*?”

“Yes. I also saw *A Fire in the Sky*.”

“Richard Crenna?”

“You’ve seen it?”

“Interesting TV movie. Now, on the off chance we did have the war and that asteroid did strike, we could have a real mess. All kinds of volcanic activity on top of the nuclear fallout. That’s about as close to an ELE that I can conceive. We’d better go so Carolyn can come back. Don’t worry about a thing; we’ll stay on top of the preparations. You just get healed up. Give some thought to becoming a horse breeder and trainer.”

“Get something to eat?”

“Hot roast beef sandwich and some Earl Grey tea. Feeling better?”

“A little, the nurse brought a Prevacid and some Ibuprofen. You dad filled me in on a few things, including the asteroid. You didn’t mention that.”

“I was going to when I got back.”

“How is the family going to be fixed with supplies?”

“Food for all of us for at least 20 years. Daddy had 4 additional 40,000 gallon diesel tanks installed and filled; one at each place. Stabilized with PRI-D and PRI-Ocide added. I know he used an anti-gel, but I’m not sure which one. He bought a small commercial biodiesel plant, too, plus a fancy still to produce alcohol. Oh, I forgot the fifth 40,000 gallon tank of gasoline. That will blend over a quarter million gallons of E-85. It’s stabilized with PRI-G.”

Carolyn got a faraway look in her eyes.

“What else?”

“Well, he got 8 of those All American 41.5 quart pressure canners and two semi loads of Ball canning jars directly from the factory. There are enough lids stored in some kind of preservative gas to last until we run out of jars. Each location now has two small commercial greenhouses, one for tropical plants and the second, which is slightly larger, for regular plants. They’re equipped with grow lights and heaters. They decided that Hans and his family would shelter with them and the old shelter would be used for food.”

“Hans Gruber was the name of the bad guy in Die Hard.”

“I don’t much care for Bruce Willis; I’ve never seen the Die Hard movies. Daddy had a steel warehouse constructed at their place and mounded over with soil. It’s to store any excess food, the jars and lids, and other things. He set up a canning area with propane burners. Plus, he added a commercial sized propane tank, 30,000 gallons; buried of course.”

“When is he going to run out of money? Since I’ve known you he’s spent a few million.”

“He’s still a millionaire, not counting all that gold and silver he has in the vault. He has been slowly cashing out his investments and purchasing more gold and silver. I think that vault is getting full. He even bought some ingot silver and had his own coins minted. They’re .9999 fine in one tenth, one quarter and one half ounce sizes. They’re not legal tender, as such. He showed all of us the coins and all they say is the size and .9999 fine.”

“No images?”

“The reverse is a map of Arizona and the front is either me, Jan or Trish. I’m on the half, Trish is on the quarter and Jan is on the tenth. They’re worth more than the junk silver. The sizes are identical to the 1995 proof coins that included the three smaller denominations.”

“Like those Kitco coins?”

“I think that’s where he got the idea.”

I healed remarkably well and was out of the hospital in 5 weeks. The doctor said he wouldn’t release me to return to work for at least 2 more weeks. Carolyn had decided in the meantime to expand our herd of horses. She bought another American Saddlebred stallion and 5 mares. She also bought 2 Morgan stallions and 10 mares. To round out her buying jag, she added flat shod Tennessee Walking Horses; 2 stallions and 10 mares. An additional three barns were in final stages of construction. They were prefabricated from Castlebrook Barns, the California Company located in the inland empire. The barns were the largest they made. The old barn would house the cattle, hogs and chickens only.

“Get into some of your personal funds?”

“No, while you were in the coma, I had a talk with Daddy. He suggested that we become breeders and trainers when you got healed up. Don’t worry, he got a discount and I did talk to him before we did it. You weren’t included since you were still in the coma. When you came to, construction was well along and I had the additional horses all bought. I wouldn’t mind adding a fourth breed, Moroccan Barbs. Purebreds are difficult to find and extremely expensive. Plus, with the kids and the state the world is in, I don’t want to be too far from home.”

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 7

Clyde and Trudy showed up about the time we finished visiting about the barns and horses.

“Been following the news about the asteroid?”

“I haven’t been following any news Clyde. It’s just too depressing. Besides, if anything important came up, you’d fill me in.”

“Where do you want me to start?”

“World War Three.”

“China walked out of the UN. Off hand, I say it’s more likely.”

“That’s just great. The asteroid?”

“It’s either going to hit or be a very near miss. They seem to think that it’s going to make its closest approach in the Pacific.”

“You seem to be bound and determined that we become horse breeders and trainers.”

“Carolyn and I had a talk. Got a deal on the barns. They actually had four available and tried to talk me into getting all four.”

“I’m surprised you didn’t.”

“I didn’t say I didn’t, did I?”

“Where are you putting up the fourth?”

“That depends on you. Carolyn wanted Moroccan Barbs. Purebreds are expensive and hard to find. But, I got lucky; I found 2 purebred stallions from different breeders and 12 mares from 2 other breeders. The horses are being shipped, air freight and I told Castlebrook to go ahead and build the fourth barn here. They’ll be starting tomorrow.”

“How much did you spend this time?”

“All I paid for was the shipping. The horses were all paid for using some of Carolyn’s gold in the vault. It’s fetching a really good price at the moment. We’ll double up the Morgans and Walkers until the fourth barn is finished. Oh, by the way, since you have so many horses, I ordered 4 more Harvestores.”

“Will they be done in time?”

“Guaranteed to be complete by the time the barns are done. Bought more hay, straw and grain, too. Horse blend, of course. Probably should have put in a second Harvestore for the old barn for cattle and hog feed. Horse feed is a blend of corn, oats and barley at a ratio by weight of 150:350:1,500 with a supplement to adjust for the quality of the hay. Cattle and hog feed is a mixture of high moisture and low moisture corn plus soybean meal and a supplement to adjust for the quality of the hay. Since you have the large pasture with the mixture of alfalfa, clover and so forth, you could get by without the supplement if the livestock could graze daily. With the way things are, I wouldn't count on that.”

“Ok, now tell me about the rest.”

“The larger greenhouse is a small to midsized commercial greenhouse. The smaller is the one from Texas Greenhouses. I plan to grow tropical and sub-tropical plants in the smaller and our regular garden fruits and vegetables in the larger. Had to put in a generator to power the grow lights and that meant putting another diesel tank. The two diesel tanks are plumbed together and the generators synchronized and the second kicks in if the first can't handle the load. I put in a warehouse at our place for the canning jars and things like that.”

“You don't need a second silo for the old barn, just fill it with cattle/hog feed.”

“Good idea, I'll spend the money on something else. None of the places that sell prep foods are taking orders. I wouldn't have gotten what I did when I did except for the amount of business we've given them in the past.”

“I'm surprised they filled the order since you have so much already.”

“I was too. Buying a whole truckload at each place helped. Money talks and I wired payment in full when I placed the orders. Freight was COD. Since you have so many horses, I loaded up on tack. There's enough now for all of the horses times two. Contacted Kirkpatrick Leather and bought a bunch of single action rigs. Then Colt to get a few Single Action Army revolvers. After that, I got a bunch more Marlin rifles.”

“Don't we have enough firearms already?”

“Well...then I contacted Springfield Armory and bought some rifles and pistols. Finally, Mossberg and they were more than pleased with the order. Wait, I forgot, have you heard of the AA-12?”

“Heard about them, yeah.”

“The AA-12 has a pistol grip and shoulder stock and an easy-sighting system. Slug rounds can extend the maximum range up to 100 meters. Rubber slugs for prisoner capture can be used up to 75 meters. The AA-12 can fire from a 10-round detachable box magazine or a 20- or 32-round ammunition drum, attaining a rate-of-fire up to 300

rounds-per-minute while having almost no muzzle climb and a dampened recoil effect. It is reported that even an infantryman weighing in at 100lbs can fire the weapon due to the near-zero recoil afforded by the weapon. Anyway, I got some. They have various models so I got some of each and plenty of magazines of all capacities.

“For ammo, I went with quite an assortment. Brenneke slugs, Remington buckshot shells, Frag-12s imported from Britain. Uh...flechette shells, breaching rounds, assorted non-lethal rounds...taser rounds and several cases of hunting shells.”

“Forget anything?”

“I don’t think so. Got rifle scabbards, assorted holsters for the pistols, ankle holsters for the PPKs and +P .380 ammo, Gold Dot.”

“Anything you DON’T have?”

“Don’t have military armored vehicles. Pretty well set on body armor though.”

“You know Clyde this reminds me of several of the Patriot Fiction stories on Frugal’s. Prepared to the n<sup>th</sup> degree...enough weapons and ammo to fight 3 or 4 world wars...tons of supplies and the ultimate fallout shelter...you know?”

“That’s why we were called Survivalists until the media made it a dirty word and Preppers thereafter. We intend to survive come what may, so we prepare. In a way, I understand... not too many people have the resources I have. But, there are groups within certain professions that are into prepping extensively. Doctors come to mind as do others. Doctors not only have a fair amount of money, they have the medical skills.”

“I’m not sure I’d want Carolyn’s OB/GYN working on me.”

“Why not, he’s a surgeon and a prepper. He belongs to a MAG I know of. Big group, 50 to 60 members. Several doctors, some law enforcement slash ex-military, a couple of mechanics, a welder, three plumbers and at least one electrician and, come to think of it, they have an ex-SEAL who was an N6, communications.”

“Where is their retreat?”

“Down near Whetstone. That’s near the turnoff for Tombstone, state route 80.”

“I haven’t been down to Tombstone in years.”

“Same ol’ tourist trap. They don’t have anything down there that we don’t have here in quantity.”

“Carolyn is really pushing this horse breeder/trainer thing. Someone would have to train me before I could train horses. The fact that I cracked a vertebra in my neck makes me leery of trying to learn to break horses.”

“It could all be moot soon. The Barbs will be here tomorrow.”

“How much does it cost to air freight 14 horses from halfway around the world?”

“Don’t ask.”

“Still doing it aren’t you?”

“I only have one daughter Barry. Just say thank you and forget it. They’re coming in via Royal Jordanian Cargo on an Airbus A310. They have transatlantic range. The plane left Amman two days ago and stopped in Marrakesh to refuel, layover and load the horses. It should be in Florida about now refueling. Don’t have their exact itinerary, so all I’m sure of that they’re supposed to arrive tomorrow. Those horses cost more than the freight by a significant margin. I’m pleased that she decided to do this. I think it also helps keep her mind of not being able to have more children. ‘Course, I got two granddaughters out of the deal so I’m not complaining.”

“But to have my accident on top of her trying to adjust to that wasn’t fair!”

“It took her mind off her own problems. Jan and Trish have been a big help for her with your three kids. Trudy and I have ten grandchildren, not bad.”

Robert and Trish had 2 boys and 2 girls. John and Jan had 2 boys and one girl, also their youngest child. If John was anything like his father, she’d be as much of Daddy’s little girl as Carolyn was. For want of something to do, I fed the livestock, milked the two cows and gathered eggs which were tasks the doc said I could do. I took the time to move the Walkers and Morgans into one of the two completed barns and left the largest herd, the American Saddlebred in their new barn. We kept the brood hens and roosters separated from the layers and it looked like we would be getting several chicks in the near future. The hens didn’t appreciate me checking so I wasn’t sure how many, but guessed full clutches of 12 eggs. Our brood hens were Plymouth Rock and the layers Leghorn in the beginning. As more chicks were hatched, we butchered the leghorns and spilt the Plymouth Rocks into brood hens and layers. While the Leghorns were prolific layers, the Plymouth Rock’s average about 200 eggs per year for the non-brooding hens. The dairy picked up the crates of eggs 3 times a week along with any milk we had available.

With three children and us, there wasn’t much milk to sell to the dairy and we used the excess for cheese. Most times, Carolyn made cottage cheese but she was working with Trish to try making Colby and Monterey Jack. To get enough milk for the cheese, we traded them eggs. I couldn’t really tell much difference between the white and brown eggs other than the brown egg shell being slightly thinner.

Clyde, Robert and John picked up the horses the next day and we settled them into the now vacant third Castlebrook. The company had already begun construction on the fourth and two of the silos were erected and full. The third silo was rising rapidly and construction on the fourth barn was well underway.

“Each barn has a tack room Barry. The 4 breeds you’ll be raising vary in size and we had to pick specific saddles, bridles, halters and saddle bags according to size. I suggest you get on Wiki and learn all you can about those 4 breeds. The Walkers are gaited and I’ll have to find a trainer for them. All of the saddles are trail saddles and the bridles have bits appropriate to each breed. We’ll help all we can training you to train them.”

“Any further on the asteroid?”

“Same story on the news today so I have nothing new.”

“The war?”

“Looking more likely every day. If either or both happen, we’ll be living out of the stored food and greenhouses. That’s why I ordered all of the extra hay, straw and livestock feed. You can use either or blend them to use as chicken feed. Either way, we’ll know in two weeks. I almost forgot, I picked up four AMP-200 high range area monitors from Arrow Tech.”

“We have one.”

“Call it a spare. What have you done for trading goods in a PAW?”

“Not much, you?”

“Fifty cases of liquor and 250 cases of cigarettes. I got a large shipment of peppers from New Mexico and beans from up north. Plenty of Pintos and corn. The rice is Calrose; it was all I could get. A little charity will go a long ways if something happens.”

“How much longer?”

“Eleven days. You’d better go through everything Carolyn and you have. It may be your last chance to stock up on things.”

“She’s taken to drinking Earl Grey tea. I load up on all I can find plus Lipton and a lot more coffee. I need to verify our inventory of Charmin, too. Eleven days should give me more than enough time to go through everything from top to bottom and make a list. I like tea, but that Earl Grey is going to be hard to like. I’ll look for English Breakfast tea and Chamomile. Bigelow makes all of it except for the Lipton. I hope I can get enough



Folgers from Costco in Phoenix. If I can't, I'll check Sam's and look in the yellow pages for coffee service firms. Between Phoenix and Tucson, I should find what I need."

"Get several of those 5-gallon pails of cooking oil Costco carries."

"Think I should pull the trailer?"

"We'll have to switch hitches, but yes, maybe you'd better. I'll check with Trudy, Jan and Trish. Ok if I ride along?"

"I could use the help if I find what I'm looking for."

"Want to take the 5 ton?"

"Good idea. I doubt the Hummer will hold much."

"I'll ask John to ride along and keep an eye on the food while we're buying and loading up. His large trailer has the hookup for the 5 ton. Call in the Bigelow order at 1-888-BIGELOW. They sell by the case and a case includes 120 bags. They have a handling fee plus the UPS charge. But, if you buy 3 or more cases, they give you a \$7 discount. That will cover most of the handling charge."

"It would guarantee delivery. I'll speak to Carolyn and give her the number."

"Honey, call this number and order 10 cases of Earl Grey, 5 cases of Chamomile and 5 cases of English Breakfast tea. Pay for 2<sup>nd</sup> day air."

"How many teabags per case?"

"One twenty."

"Are you planning on buying the Lipton?"

"Yes, five cases if I can get it."

"I'll get 15 cases of the Earl Grey then."

"We're leaving for Phoenix around 6 am. If you need anything, give me the list. I'm going to do a quick inventory and list anything we're short of."

"Don't forget the Folgers. You might stock on Liquor and cigarettes for trade goods."

"Like father, like daughter?"

“Get Coke Classic, all you have room for. We’ll also check every store in Tucson and get all they have. We’ll do the same on coffee and pasta. Sam’s has bulk pasta, don’t forget.”

“We’re taking the five ton and Johnny’s trailer.”

“Don’t be surprised if you can’t get everything we want.”

“I know, but it’s worth a try.”

“You guys better take your weapons along.”

“Ok. Why don’t you and your mother check both Tucson stores and the Sam’s Club? There are nearly 20 Costco stores in the Phoenix area plus 10 Sam’s Clubs.”

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“How did it go in Phoenix?”

“They were limiting, but we got full loads. The Sam Clubs were limiting too but we ended up renting a 24’ U-Haul truck. We’re returning tomorrow with both trucks. We’ll turn in the U-Haul and hit the outlying stores we missed. How’d the two of you do?”

“Daddy’s pickup and our trailer were almost overloaded. Mom said we’d go back tomorrow. She paid the freight charges on the horses. You have no idea how much it cost to ship those horses.”

“Clyde said, ‘don’t ask’.”

“It’s going to take a few years to recover the shipping costs. Beautiful horses, all grey.”

“What about the tea?”

“They shipped today and it’s two day air so we’ll be ok. Did you buy bath tissue?”

“All they had out.”

“We did too. The more the better. Coffee?”

“One hundred eighty cans. They were limiting purchases to 10 flats per person. So we each bought ten flats. I got 10 of those 50 pound bags of Jasmine rice too. They had 50 pound bags of pintos and I got 10 of those too. Did pretty good on spices too. Could you get Hans to run the 2 steers and 6 hogs into the butcher shop? They won’t be able to age the beef long enough. It should be okay though.”

“How to you want it cut?”

“The beef should be steaks, roasts and ground meat. Have them add boneless to get it to either ground round or ground sirloin.”

“Which is which?”

“Ground sirloin is the 10% and round is 12%.”

“I’ll do what I can.”

“What did you do for supper?”

“We ate out. You?”

“I’m starving. Have anything quick and easy?”

“A pepperoni pizza.”

“That will work.”

“Give it 20 minutes. Why don’t you get a shower?”

“I’ll hurry.”

I showered and shaved and wore my robe to the kitchen. I had a bottle of Coors with the pizza and by the time I’d eaten, I couldn’t keep my eyes open.

“You’d better get another 25ft<sup>3</sup> chest freezer tomorrow. I’m going to bed.”

Jan came over the next day to watch the kids. Trish and Robert waited at Clyde and Trudy’s to pay the shipping charges on the LTS food orders. We were unloaded and left at 6 and dropped off the U-Haul before we started hitting the Sam’s Clubs. Then we filled out the truck and trailer at the other Costco stores. Clyde paid for everything with his Platinum American Express and I gave him a check to cover our portion of what we bought. Carolyn called on her cell and said the hogs and steers had been delivered and they had or could get enough boneless for ground sirloin. Sears would deliver the freezer the next day.

That night we saw the asteroid for the first time. It was still a few days out and there wasn’t much to see. The next day, we stored all we could in the shelter basement and house basement with the remainder going to Clyde’s warehouse. They finished the barn that day and we moved the Morgans to the fourth barn. Carolyn said she’d arranged to have the horse feed transferred to the last Harvestore and the cattle/hog feed would be there as soon as the silo by the old barn was emptied.

The Harvestore was completed around noon and we used 4 augers to transfer the grain from the old silo to the new. The feed would arrive around 6 the next morning and we could use two pair of augers to move the grain. Clyde hired some locals to move the hay and straw to the loft of the latest barn using a hay elevator.

In older style barns, the upper area was used to store hay and sometimes grain. This is called the mow (rhymes with cow) or the hayloft. A large door at the top of the ends of the barn could be opened up so that hay could be put in the loft using bale spears. The hay was hoisted into the barn by a system containing pulleys and a trolley that ran along a track attached to the top ridge of the barn. A trap door in the floor allowed animal feed to be dropped into the mangers for the animals.

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The waiting was hard and getting to sleep at night, next to impossible. Carolyn put on *West Side Story* and one song in particular brought it all home...

*Tonight, Tonight, won't be just any night.  
Tonight there will be no morning star.  
Tonight, Tonight, I'll see my love tonight.  
And for us stars will stop where they are.  
Today the minutes seem like hours,  
The hours go so slowly,  
And still the sky is light,  
The moon burns bright,  
And make this endless day,  
endless night,  
Tonight, Tonight.*

The world was poised at the brink...the light in the sky was brighter and slightly larger every night. China had finished moving the PLA into position for loading on the amphibious ships. Scientists gave a final report and said the asteroid would strike the planet off the coast of Sumatra, close to, if not directly upon the Sunda Megathrust. Indonesia, Sri Lanka and several countries began attempts to evacuate. They succeeded only in putting more people in danger.

Chinese ships began firing on Taipei using guns and missiles. The land based missiles began to fly in waves. The President addressed the nation, hours before the expected asteroid strike. As we watched the address from what appeared to be the Oval Office, his National Security Adviser handed him a sheet of paper. He blanched and asked, *Are you sure* followed by, *where is the football?*

He departed and the National Security Adviser resumed the briefing, announcing an Air Defense Emergency. He continued on with a statement to the effect that the US was now at DEFCON 1 and the President was releasing the launch codes. This was followed by several sheltering suggestions although I doubted most people would have

time to get to a shelter if they knew where one was located. Blame Congress and the Executive Branch, they eliminated the Civil Defense program in favor of FEMA and we all know about FEMA.

As predicted, anyone with a nuclear weapon of any size, type, shape or form issued launch codes to attack their least favorite country. India and Pakistan, Israel and the Middle East, Iran and Israel, Russia and China, China and the US, Russia and the US, with the US retaliating against everyone who fired on us.

We had time to get the livestock into their barns, pack the doorways with straw covered by plastic and soil. I forgot about my neck entirely and moved as fast as I could. Carolyn moved Billy, Sara and Margo to the shelter and began moving the food from the refrigerator to the shelter. I was putting the last bucket of soil in place when the ground shook slightly. I turned off the tractor and headed for the shelter.

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“What’s the word?”

“I don’t use that kind of language. Shoot comes close.”

“How are we going to care for the livestock?”

“Take the culvert to the old barn where it connects to the culverts to the new barns and the hen houses.”

“What culvert?”

“The one Daddy put in before they started on the barns, silly.”

“Everything grounded?”

“Everything but one AM/FM portable. Cuppa?”

“What? You just going to sit there and drink a cup of tea while the world ends?”

“The world won’t end for a few hours yet. Don’t forget that asteroid. That could do it if it hits that subduction zone. Daddy said that if it did, it could set off most of the volcanoes in the ring of fire.”

“I think I dreamed this.”

The dream began when she asked me if I had any trouble getting home and ended when I woke up in the hospital 42 days later. Reality and my dream didn’t have much in common, up to now. We tried to call Clyde, Robert and John and the phones were down. The green light indicating the generator was running glared from the panel on the

wall behind my communications desk. Each emergency system had a light to indicate if it were kicked in. The air purification system was automatic except for switching to the NBC filters. All nine air purifiers were running and I made my way to the basement to switch the air from bypass to the filters.

“I had a pot of chili simmering on the stove and bought French bread this morning. Is that ok or do you want something else?”

“What I want is a good stiff drink. The chili will be fine, thank you. I think we took a strike somewhere.”

“I felt that, Phoenix?”

“There or Palo Verde.”

“What about Fort Huachuca?”

“What about Fort Huachuca?”

“Signals and Intelligence. Is it a likely target?”

“I have no idea. Did you feel that?”

“The tremor? Another strike? How long before the asteroid strike?”

“A little over 7 hours. Do you think I should hook up one of the business radios and try to contact your family?”

“Please?”

“It’s a good thing we have spares.”

I couldn’t get through on the radio and disconnected it. The CD V-717 wasn’t showing any radiation, nor was the AMP-200. We talked it over and decided I should suit up and make a quick run to check on her family. The intercoms were out and the shelters all locked down. With the double door setup, they couldn’t hear me inside and I returned home about 20 minutes later.

“Well?”

“Locked down and the intercoms are all out.”

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 8

“But the Hummer started ok?”

“After I swapped out the chip, it worked just fine. How many of those controllers did he buy?”

“Two spares. They were under \$500 each. Are you ready to eat? The chili will hold for as long as you need.”

“Beans?”

“No. I used the new coarse ground sirloin. It’s Mom’s medium Texas chili recipe so you won’t need a gallon of milk.”

“Crap, I need to go milk the cows. Hold the chili for 30 minutes. Where is the culvert entrance?”

“In the basement on the side closest to the old barn. It has a steel cover; you’ll see it.”

“Thirty inch culvert?”

“No. Concrete oval about 6’ high and 3’ wide. You’ll have to duck but you won’t have to crawl.”

I guess I shouldn’t have been surprised because Clyde never did anything halfway. I expect a 30” culvert with a creeper and got a sealed oval I could walk down. I decided that after I milked the two cows, I’d gather the eggs and make two trips back to the shelter. We could freeze the excess eggs for later use.

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If you receive a windfall of eggs far beyond your capacity to use within a few weeks, they can be frozen - not in the shell, of course. Only freeze clean, fresh eggs.

Break and separate the eggs, one at a time, making sure that no yolk gets in the whites. Pour them into freezer containers, seal tightly, label with the number of egg whites and the date, and freeze. For faster thawing and easier measuring, first freeze each white in an ice cube tray and then transfer to a freezer container.

Egg yolks require special treatment. The gelatin property of yolk causes it to thicken or gel when frozen. If frozen as is, egg yolk will eventually become so gelatinous it will be almost impossible to use in a recipe. To help retard this gelatin, beat in either ⅛ teaspoon salt or 1½ teaspoons sugar or corn syrup per ¼ cup egg yolks (4 yolks). Label the container with the number of yolks, the date, and whether you've added salt (for main dishes) or sweetener (for baking or desserts).

Beat just until blended, pour into freezer containers. seal tightly, label with the number of eggs and the date, and freeze.

Hard-cooked yolks can be frozen to use later for toppings or garnishes. Carefully place the yolks in a single layer in a saucepan and add enough water to come at least 1 inch above the yolks. Cover and quickly bring just to boiling. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, in the hot water about 15 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon, drain well and package for freezing.

Hard-cooked whole eggs and whites become tough and watery when frozen, so don't freeze them.

To use frozen eggs...thaw frozen eggs overnight in the refrigerator or under running cold water. Use yolks or whole eggs as soon as they're thawed. Once thawed, whites will beat to better volume if allowed to sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes. Substitute 2 tablespoons thawed egg white for 1 large fresh white. Substitute 1 table-spoon thawed egg yolk for 1 large fresh yolk.

Substitute 3 tablespoons thawed whole egg for 1 large fresh egg.

Use thawed frozen eggs only in dishes that are thoroughly cooked.

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After we ate, I washed the eggs, cracked them into a large bowl and beat them into scrambled eggs. Carolyn had several pint and quart plastic containers and we packed and then froze them. She carefully heated the milk on the stove to 161° then stored it in cleaned out milk jugs. She said she'd make cottage cheese the next day using rennet. Rennet produces large curd cottage cheese.

We didn't get any radiation immediately so I assumed Yuma wasn't hit. If San Diego was hit, we'd get the radiation later. We set the alarm so we'd be up for the asteroid strike. Talk about lousy timing for a GTW!

I was on the long side of exhausted and Carolyn said she'd wake me before the impact was to occur. I was out as soon as my head hit the pillow. It was almost like I was unconscious; I was totally out of it. Carolyn woke me about 30 minutes ahead of time and talk about disoriented...

"What happened, another traffic accident?"

"What are you talking about?"



“You know when I had that first accident I dreamed all sort of natural disasters with some manmade disasters just waiting to happen. This dream was sort of the reverse of that, the manmade disasters happened before the natural disasters.”

“No, you didn’t have another accident. I hate to tell you but it wasn’t a dream. Look around you. Where are you?”

“In the main bedroom of the shelter. Wait, it wasn’t a dream?”

“We had World War Three and it lasted less than two hours. And the asteroid is due to strike in about 30 minutes.”

“What happened to our ships in the Far East?”

“I don’t have the foggiest idea.”

◦

At this time, we didn’t know the status of the Pacific Fleet. While the President was issuing the launch codes, emergency orders were passed to the CSGs to depart eastward at flank speed. Depending on the ship, flank speed varied, the CGs and DDGs, kept pace with the Carriers. Most had been refueled within the previous 24 hours. While the Cruisers had sufficient speed and fuel to stay with the Carriers for most of the way back to Pearl, there were several problems. The DDGs couldn’t match the speed and lacked the fuel. To maintain the defensive shields, the CSGs throttled back to 20 knots once they were beyond the reach of the Chinese aircraft. At flank speed, the ships could shake themselves apart in short order. Worse, there was no Pearl to return to, nor San Diego, nor Bremerton.

◦

As we watched the clock tick down to the inevitable, we were kept busy feeding, diapering and tending to Sara and Margo. Billy was sound asleep, hugging his teddy bear. Since San Diego was about 400 miles as the crow flies, I figured it would be between 24 and 40 hours before we began receiving fallout. This rendered our concerns over the strike to the forefront of our thoughts.

A few moments after the projected time of the strike passed, we felt a tremendous shock, not unlike a major earthquake. It was powerful enough to wake all three kids, crying. The language we used about then definitely wasn’t for mixed company. I believe we now had an idea of what the Chicxulub impact must have felt like. I’d done some research.

According to Wiki, “The impact would have caused some of the largest mega-tsunamis in Earth’s history, reaching thousands of meters high. A cloud of super-heated dust, ash and steam would have spread from the crater, as the impactor burrowed underground in

less than a second. Excavated material along with pieces of the impactor, ejected out of the atmosphere by the blast, would have been heated to incandescence upon re-entry, broiling the Earth's surface and possibly igniting global wildfires; meanwhile, enormous shock waves spawned global earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The emission of dust and particles could have covered the entire surface of the Earth for several years, possibly a decade, creating a harsh environment for living things to survive in. The shock production of carbon dioxide caused by the destruction of carbonate rocks would have led to a sudden greenhouse effect. Over a longer period of time, sunlight would have been blocked from reaching the surface of the earth by the dust particles in the atmosphere, cooling the surface dramatically. Photosynthesis by plants would also have been interrupted, affecting the entire food chain.”

“Maybe your Dad was right in preparing to the level he did.”

“Told ya. Chicxulub was an ELE, just ask the dinosaurs. Some call it the ‘mother of all mass extinctions’.”

“If it’s that bad, we might not survive.”

“Bite your tongue. This impact was on the other side of the world at roughly 3°N and 96°E. We’re located at 32°N and 111°W so we’re about 9,400-9,500 miles from the strike location. The reason we felt it so sharply was the asteroid must have hit the sea floor.”

“What, you’re suddenly a scientist?”

“Daddy did some research.”

I don’t care what Carolyn said; in and of itself, the impact was nearly, if not, an ELE. Top that off with a GTW with fallout still floating in the air everywhere and we’d have to climb a steep mountain if we expected to survive. Interestingly enough, shortly after the impact, we started picking up radiation from, presumably, San Diego. It was on the order of 300R/hr peak level which was consistent with a detonation 7 hours earlier with a peak level onsite of 3,000R.

I can’t tell you the wind speed because my Davis Weather Monitor II has a maximum wind speed of 175mph and an alarm when the wind speed exceeded that. The alarm was sounding scaring the kids even more.

“Oh, oh.”

“Oh, oh what?”

“That first dream I had? I think it’s going to come true. I wish I could remember some of the details. I remember Yellowstone and Long Valley and something about Anak Krakatau.”

“You also asked about Cumbre Vieja collapsing.”

“Sounds like I was dreaming about all those Mega Disasters. I have the Wiki link but I can’t look up the episodes.”

“You don’t remember the shows?”

“A few of them; I missed a couple too. I remember some of the natural disasters like Cumbre Vieja and Yellowstone. They had one on Cascadia, another on Mt. Rainer, the asteroid strike, New Madrid Fault Zone, Anak Krakatau, a comet, the one on the gamma ray burst and a second about an asteroid. That’s about all I can remember. Wait, they did a couple on tornadoes, Dallas and Chicago.”

“You know that, while the speculation was based on fact, most of those will never happen.”

“Oh honey, never say never.”

“Who said that, FDR?”

“Jesse Ventura. The quote is, ‘I’ll never say never, because you never know what will happen.’”

“The actor?”

“He said that while he was Governor of Minnesota in reference to future political ambitions. I think the last film he was in came out in 2009.”

“Did you see it?”

“I can’t recall, did we?”

“Must not, I haven’t seen it.”

One the 8<sup>th</sup> day after the war, which only lasted a few hours, we had the radios hooked up listening for the other members of the family. We couldn’t go out yet, even for a quick look see, we were sitting on about 5 and a fraction Rads.

“Barry or Carolyn, this is Clyde.”

“What, are you transmitting on the CB, business radio and 10 meters at the same time?”

“Barry, thank goodness. Yeah, didn’t know which one you’d be on. Take your pick and I’ll get off the other two mikes.”

“Business band channel one is fine.”

“Everybody ok over there?”

“So far. I’ve been using that set of tunnels you forgot to tell me about to take care of the livestock. We have enough frozen whole eggs to last many moons. Carolyn made cottage cheese first and is now working on some Colby. We’re getting about 13 gallons of milk a day and we’re making cheese rather than slop the hogs. It’s a real pain to pasteurize it.”

“You probably don’t need to do that.”

“We’re not going to chance it.”

“How long are you going to shelter?”

“Well, I’ll tell you. We didn’t get any radiation until the asteroid hit. All of a sudden it jumped to 300 Rads. Don’t know how fast the wind was blowing, but it was over 175mph. I’m thinking San Diego took a nuke and it produced about 3,000 Rads. According to the seven ten rule and that spreadsheet, 300 Rads would be right on the money. Anyway I plugged 3,000 Rads based on the passage of time and the spreadsheet says 2,401 hours or 7 to the fourth power. Still be high. I’d prefer we waited until 475 days when it’s below 50 millirads.”

“I wish you hadn’t said that, we each came up with the same thing.”

“We can probably get out for a few minutes in about a month. You should have put in tunnels to the greenhouses while you were at it.”

“Why? Sure won’t be any sunlight. They don’t offer any protection against radiation either. You want that, you have to build greenhouses like Percy’s. Nobody’s gonna run outta food in 475 days. You have several years’ worth in your shelter basement.”

“Yeah and all those trade goods.”

“Stay away from the liquor.”

“Gonna drink up the Coors before it goes bad. The Single Barrel will keep. You think there are going to be people out and about in this?”

“Probably, but not for long. I’ve been trying to reach that MAG on the ham bands but haven’t made contact yet. Could be too soon. I figured that they bugged out early because of the situation over Taiwan and the pending asteroid strike. I know they have business band radios and if I knew their frequencies, I could reprogram one of my spares.”

“Closed mouth, huh?”

“You know how it goes, Silence is Golden. What someone else doesn’t know about you can’t be used against you. I’m going to pull out a second scanning receiver to cover a second ham band.”

“How many scanners do you have?”

“Sixteen, one for each band, 160, 80, 60, 40, 30, 20, 15, 12, 10, 6, 2 and 1.25 meters, 70 and 23 centimeters plus two spares. I have them hooked up to that Diamond D-130J Discone and several MFJ single band walkabouts.”

“That work?”

“They don’t cover 160 meters. I had to use a loading coil for 160 meters.”

“But your transceiver covers 160 meters doesn’t it?”

“Yeah, it has the same bands as your Kenwood. Are you familiar with Yaesu?”

“The Lamborghini of amateur radios? I looked at them. They don’t do much more than my Kenwood. If I wanted more output, I could get an amplifier, say an Ameritron or one of several other brands. Some of the others cost more than the radios. Besides, the key is the antenna, not so much the radio. I have the 10 band vertical and the Cushcraft beam. The business radio antenna was what they recommended and my CB antenna is a  $\frac{5}{8}$  wave Radio Shack. My only concession was to add desk mikes.”

“Speaking of radios, I don’t suppose you could get your hands on some of those SINCGARS or the small troop radios?”

“You still having memory problems from your accident?”

“Why?”

“I told you we didn’t need to go to Flagstaff to get anything. Unless you want some MANPADS or something really exotic.”

“I took that to mean weapons and munitions.”

“Well yeah, the bunker is full of that stuff. We just need something to convert the voltage to conform to the SINCGARS voltage. Either a power supply for the base units or a source of 28VDC for the mobile units. The MANPACKs are 12 volt. The radios are those ASIP units. For individual radios, I picked up some AN/PRC-343 PRRs. The voltage is no problem; I added a second 28v generator and battery for the radios only.”

“You could have said that rather than the long explanation.”

“Yeah, but you’re so much fun sometimes. I actually can get the Stingers but we don’t really need them. Besides they’re thirty eight thousand a pop.”

“Regular check in schedule at 0800, 1200, 1600 and 2000 hours?”

“Yes. But to simplify the procedure just use the channel for the day number. One of us will be monitoring those channels 24/7. One last thing; since we don’t know what’s happening outside, stay locked and loaded.”

“Should I cut the power feed to the house?”

“You have a full freezer in the basement and we could be in for some cold weather. You’d better leave the house connected. Did you set the thermostat to 55°?”

“I’ll ask and let you know.”

“Clyde, Barry with the noon check in. Maintaining status quo.”

“Did you check the house?”

“She couldn’t remember so I checked. It was set on 65° so I dropped it to 55°.”

“What’s it out like outside?”

“At 1100, when I checked the house, it was dark, like just before sunrise.”

“Since you have time on your hands, I’d appreciate if you do a few things. First, inventory your food stocks and ammo. When you have that done read the gauges for the diesel tanks. I know what we have stored in the warehouse. Give me your best estimate of the food in your basement. Your Hummer ran, was it ok or did you have to switch the control modules?”

“I switched them. It would start and run but was rough as a cob. The new modules resolved that. Did you try yours?”

“The modules are stored in the shelter. I have another for your Alpha if you need it. If I can contact the MAG, I think that communications SEAL can replace the chip, assuming I have the right one. How long were you out?”

“About five minutes; just long enough to check the thermostat. My dosimeter barely moved.”

“Is it a CD V-742?”

“Yes, part of what I bought from Radmeters4U. What’s your barometer doing?”

“Standby...it’s falling. I think we have a low pressure front moving in.”

“This is becoming more and more like that dream I had when I was in the coma.”

“You never said much about that dream, give me the high points.”

“Ok, Anak Krakatau blew, the Cascadia slipped and Seattle was wiped out. Most of the Cascade Range began erupting and both Yellowstone and Long Valley had violent eruptions. Let’s see...Mt. Etna erupted as did a major portion of the volcanoes in Alaska. And, that submarine volcano in Hawaii poked its nose above sea level for the first time. Have you heard anything on the amateur bands?”

“A piece here and there. Too much ionization and perhaps the amount of ash in the air.”

“In my dream, we had a low pressure font come in bringing ash and snow.”

“Until we can contact someone and find out what their weather conditions are, we’re pretty much in the dark, figuratively and literally.”

“You want the information as we get it or after we’ve completed everything?”

“I’ll wait. You might give some thought about things you’re going to need in a Post-Apocalyptic World, primarily manufactured goods.”

“I’ll start a list although off the top of my head whatever it takes to keep the vehicles running for as long as possible.”

“You have plenty of horses. We’ll keep our eyes out for horse drawn equipment like wagons and buggies. Those trade goods and the precious metals are going to come in handy. We’ll need to check military installations for HMMWV parts and trailers. I believe they have some larger than most civilian sizes.”

“I don’t suppose much of our high tech gear is going to be of much good.”

“It will be ok as long as it works or as long as we can get parts to keep it repaired Barry. When we lose our satellites, we’ll be back to maps and compasses. Knowledge is power so we made sure all three of our children had good educations. It wasn’t so much the power aspect as they’re being able to continue to provide for themselves. Carolyn’s education wasn’t my preferred choice. I figured she’d get married and it wouldn’t matter as much.”

“That’s a little chauvinistic, don’t you think?”

“What can I say, I’m a generation older than you kids. Those older skills could come in handy in the future.”

“Assuming we have a future.”

“You throw the dice and take your chances. You don’t always throw seven or eleven. You have four chances to crap out and eight at a win. Are our odds much different?”

“They may not be that good.”

“The glass is half full, not half empty. Lighten up. If anyone has a chance, it’s this family and that MAG I mentioned. Their advantage is the medical professionals, provided they have what they need when they need it. We have way and beyond above what the average person has and enough training for routine emergencies. If someone needs surgery, we’ll have to find that MAG or somebody may die.”

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There weren’t communications, beyond local stuff, because of the radiation and the static generated from the ash. The negatives outweighed the positives by a high factor. We had good shelter, livestock providing eggs and milk, alternative means of transportation if and when the air cleared and were relatively well off; much better than about 6 billion other residents of the planet Earth.

We were first able to spend reasonable periods of time outside at 100 days into the event. The maximum acceptable daily dose of radiation is 2.5 Rads per 24 hour period, to avoid radiation sickness. We could spend 8 hours out without short term problems. However, there was the concern about cancer later in life and damage to the lungs and eyes due to the heavy ash lingering in the air. A gas mask will only take so much dust before you have to change the filter and we did not have an unlimited supply of filters.

We did have cases full of N-100 and N-95 masks, including disposable and more permanent. The family reached a decision to leave the shelters permanently at the one year mark. At that time, the fallout should be decayed to below 60 millirads. It was also felt that a majority of the ash would be settled out of the air by then. Since it would be the heavier particles of ash settling, the really fine stuff would still be there blocking the sun and ready to be inhaled.

Clyde and Robert ‘perfected’ a mask for the horses and the side benefit was their inability to graze wearing the masks. We got substantially more ash fall than I expected and it took many passes with the farm equipment to incorporate the ash into the pasture. We didn’t actually have a useable pasture until around the time we came out of the shelters and moved to the houses.

The houses were a mess and we started by shoveling the ash and then moving to shop vacuums and finally to the regular vacuum cleaners. Still, daily dusting was required to avoid accumulation of ash dust on everything in the homes. Since the ash dust was abrasive, that meant using the vacuum, generally the shop vacuum. Finally, Clyde



pulled out spare air purifiers and we used only the first stage filters to eliminate the dust. We were beginning the process of improvising, adapting and overcoming.

We had the lists that Clyde wanted listing available food, available feed, ammunition, critically needed items, items it would be nice to have and a separate list of trade goods to salvage. In light of earlier discussions, we started first with medical supplies. The drug distribution warehouses had the most current meds and we hit those before we hit the pharmacies and two of the hospitals. University was still operating using a bare bones staff and had limited supplies. We gave them the majority of what we gleaned from the other two hospitals. Unfortunately, the staff had interns and doctors serving their residencies. Clyde continued to try and contact that MAG.

We located a large 3 phase diesel generator and more than a few tankers. We used the equipment to collect the diesel fuel stored at truck stops and service stations. In fact, two truck stops became storage facilities for the fuel gathered from other locations. While we didn't take any fuel from the fuel distributors in the area, we secured their supplies and took the anti-gel and fuel stabilizers we found. One guy actually had several pallets holding 4 55 gallon drums of PRI-D and PRI-G. While the shelf life of the product was reputed to be about 3 years, we didn't worry too much about that because a majority of it was used to stabilize the in-place supplies of fuel and the fuel at the truck stops. We did our best to corner the propane supply, and in the process located 3 empty 30,000 gallon propane tanks. Robert, John and Carolyn were each allocated a tank.

Since it was far too much work for the family to handle itself many of the more desperate surviving families in the area were employed and paid in food, fuel, weapons and ammo. None was willing to take gold and silver in payment until they had their other needs met. Tucson had a metro area population, pre-war of about 1.2 million and post war, post recovery of about 100-125,000. More died, either from famine, disease or from force of arms during the following year.

Roving gangs equipped with military hardware were one of the biggest concerns. While they preferred to hit smaller communities, those communities had little to offer, once taken. With Phoenix nuked, the survivors either headed north to Flagstaff or south to Tucson. Not all of those survivors were friendly and many felt they were owed by some unnamed source, usually the nonexistent federal and state governments. After the governments it became the haves owing the have-nots.

With the amount of farm work on the 180 acres owned by the family, collectively, and the amount of salvage related work, the family was employing over 300 head of households. In addition, ex-military with special ops being preferred, were engaged as a guard force. On their own, they visited Fort Huachuca equipping and arming themselves. Uparmored HMMWVs were preferred, but limited. A second trip was made to the Navaho Depot.

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 9

Delete the Camp from the name; it's mostly a profitable civilian operation handling military supplies including some \$7 billion worth of munitions. We ended up with a well-equipped guard force and a waiting list of applicants.

While machineguns and automatic weapons aren't high on a survivalist's list of preferred equipment, Clyde had some in that bunker. The ammo he was short, together with various equipment, was available from Navajo. We ended up with uparmored HMMWVs with M2HBs, Mk-19s, TOWs and Stingers. Before that second year was over, we'd used most of it, including the stingers to shoot down a Cobra gunship.

We even had some of those Javelins that Clyde refused to buy. We had what it took to take on anything in the US arsenal up to Bradley's and stood a good chance against the M1A3B Abrams should we ever come up against one. You should see what a Javelin does to a Stryker in the top-attack flight mode. We even had two HMMWVs equipped with Hellfire missiles. *Come on, we dare ya!*

The family took very little of the food recovered for family use. It was distributed to, first, the employees and secondly to the hospital. The remaining food, what little there was of it, was used to supply two supermarkets for a percentage of their proceeds. Since everything recovered was free, aside of paying the employees, Clyde wasn't interested in making much of a profit, if any. Neither was he interested when it was suggested that he should run for Mayor of Tucson. He declined citing pressing family concerns (surviving).

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Everything I had dreamed in the coma came to pass, and more. Cumbre Vieja slide into the Atlantic causing a mega-tsunami. That eliminated most of the survivors on the east coast, British Isles and west coast of Africa. Some of the Caribbean islands were washed clear of habitation.

"Next year we're going to plant an outside garden. The plants growing in the large greenhouse are mostly intended to produce seed. I wish Daddy had purchased 5 semi loads of canning jars slash lids and 50 canners."

"Don't suppose you planted potatoes or salad greens?"

"Iceberg and Romaine lettuce, Russet's and Yukon gold, slicing and canning tomatoes, ok?"

"Sure missed the baked potatoes and salads with the steaks. Canned mushrooms are ok, but nothing beats fresh mushrooms."

“We aren’t doing mushrooms. A couple of families in Tucson are doing that at Kartchner Caverns over near Whetstone. They’re doing all they can to avoid despoiling the Caverns.”

“Good. The salvage teams have collected over 50 different varieties of potato starts and a trailer load of hybrid seeds. Your father has been handing them out as part of the compensation so they’ll get used up before they go bad. My initial impression of your family was way off base. I thought it was family first, last and always and to hell with everyone else.”

“At least you know better now. How is the horse training coming?”

“Good...better than good. The main problem seems to be the fact that we can’t produce enough horses to meet the demand. It’s peoples’ own fault. If they’d taken better care of their vehicles, we could supply both the gasoline and diesel. Nobody believed your dad when he recommended changing oil and filters at 1,000 mile and/or 1 month intervals. A college professor tested the air last week and the amount of suspended ash is small enough now to go to the 3,000 mile and/or 3 month interval for servicing vehicles. With all the filters and pre-filters on the Suburban, it will last longer than my H1.”

“It has the same pre-filters as the Suburban and you’ve followed his advice. He must have spent a large fortune at American Safe Rooms between the shelter filtration units, the spare filters and the Safe Cells and automotive installation kits.”

“At least he had it to spend.”

“Are you finally over that attitude you had about Daddy helping us?”

“I’d be completely over it if you’d replay him for the freight for the Moroccan Barbs.”

“I can, it’s only 100 ounces of gold. Think about it, we’d still end up with  $\frac{1}{3}$  of it back. It’s not like he’s treated each of us exactly equally, Robert has received the most and Johnny and I are close to even with each other. His attitude has always been ‘each to his need’. It’s so much anyway that a million here or there won’t mean much.”

“I didn’t know Clyde was a communist. I thought he was a red blooded American Patriot.”

“What do you mean?”

“That philosophy. Karl Marx advocated, ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. I picked that up in history class.’”

“I knew that; must have slipped my mind. Anyway, he only believes in the last part, not the first. I got an offer on one of the Barb geldings today. Two hundred dollars. I was ready to punch the guy out until he explained that he would pay in gold Eagles in the

face amount stated on the coin. I realized it was four ounces of gold or somewhere between \$6,000 and \$8,000, depending on whose price of gold you believe.”

“That gelding is only 3 years old and hasn’t had much training. Does the price include the tack?”

“He said he’d even supply the halter.”

“What do you think?”

“I’m not sure. I told him I’d have to talk it over with you and Daddy. Daddy wasn’t much help. He said it’s up to us.”

“I’m not sure either. There is one interesting aspect to the transaction I find intriguing.”

“That being?”

“The revaluation of the dollar. Since a silver Eagle has a legal value of \$1 and a gold Eagle has a legal value of \$50, it would firm the ratio between the price of gold and silver at 50:1. Additionally, it would devalue the dollar by somewhere between the \$1,500 and \$2,000 figures you mentioned. Ergo by 30 to 40 to one. Fiat currency has no intrinsic value and I’m not totally convinced that gold and silver do either.”

“So what you’re saying is that something priced at \$40 might only be worth \$1, in silver.”

“I think that’s what I said. I only have a BE from SHK, you know; not counting BT and AIT.”

“In my book, that beats a BA in History.”

“Why didn’t you get a Master’s in History?”

“That’s better than the BA? I didn’t want to be a History professor or spend the time it would take to get a PhD. I’m surprised I didn’t remember that Karl Marx quote. I’m going to bring this subject up with the family and see if they’re interested in devaluing the currency.”

“Nobody is taking Federal Reserve Notes anyway. Maybe it IS a good idea.”

“I do remember one thing from my History classes.”

“The Santayana quote?”

“You know it?”

“One of two mottos I picked up from reading Patriot Fiction. The first is from the movie Heartbreak Ridge, ‘Improvise, Adapt, Overcome’. The second is, ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’”

“The first will help us in the future although I doubt the Santayana quote will have much use in the immediate future.”

“I agree. About that horse, let’s make the sale and make it clear that the sales price is \$200 in gold or silver. That might help establish both the 50:1 ratio and begin the process of creating a revalued currency. The old South African banknote was the Rand. I don’t know if it’s true but I heard somewhere that the Krugerrand was the name for a fifty Rand banknote. Since the one ounce Krugerrand is equal to a gold Eagle, any gold and silver coins containing exact measures of metal equal to the Eagles could be interchangeable. The Canadian coins probably wouldn’t circulate because they’re 24 carat although the value would be the same. Maybe they could be used within whatever banking system is reestablished.”

“I still want to discuss this with my family.”

“I assumed that.”

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The family agreed with the suggestion. Clyde laughed that he had suddenly become much poorer. I pointed out that assuming a 40 to 1 devaluation, the worst case, his fifty dollar gold pieces would buy 40 times more in goods. He laughed and said he knew that he hadn’t lost any value but if the IRS ever got reestablished, he intended to write off the loss.

We didn’t need an Internal Revenue Service because there was no federal government to spend more money than they collected. Welfare was truly a thing of the past. If you wanted to eat, you grew it, worked for it or, unfortunately, stole it. Those gangs I mentioned earlier must have found some place with food to hole up for a while. In the same vein that it’s always darkest before dawn, we had a peaceful second and third year, post war and impact.

Either they ran out of food or killed off those producing the food for them because in the late fall of the third year, a Battalion sized force of raiders numbering perhaps 750 was spotted setting up camp north of Tucson on I-10. They should have conducted a small reconnaissance mission before they got that close. Given the sheer quantity of arms and ammunition recovered from Navajo and Huachuca, Tucson was an armed camp. The liberals among the Tucson populous hadn’t fared well in the post war, post-strike environment. Arizona always was a semi-armed camp, for the most part, anyway. Our security force, being special ops types, had provided instruction for several of the new militias.

And, since it's relevant at this point, Clyde had contacted the MAG during the second year. Some of their people were also instrumental in training the Tucson survivors. In addition to the military supplies and ordnance, several of the militias rolled their own. When the other side did that, we called them IEDs. But, *one man's freedom fighter is another's terrorist* (Nelson Mandela, 1961). *The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices – submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defense of our people, our future, and our freedom.*

There wasn't a highway, road or cow path into Tucson that wasn't protected by militias and/or ordnance. Manned ordnance, none of this remotely controlled crap that could take out an uninformed local. There was enough night vision gathered up to supply everyone with a finger on a switch and most of those with fingers on triggers.

Since the Johnson and Simmons families have a corner on the .50 caliber sniping weapons, every member of the family with a .50BMG worked the defense as snipers. That still left Trudy, Jan and Trish home to watch the kids and oversee the harvest and canning. Hans partnered with Clyde as his spotter and the rest of us were able to find experienced spotters among the security forces. We equipped the spotters with our Super Match rifles and 175gr Black Hills Match Boat Tail Hollow Point. It works as well as the 168gr Match Boat Tail Hollow Point because the rifling in 1:10. We were carrying our M1911s and the AA-12s for backup. That was a lot of weight to haul but a little sweat to have something that could save your butt wasn't too much to ask.

Understand, it wasn't like we were hauling the stuff miles; it was closer to 200 meters, tops. We even had time to go back and haul more loaded magazines back to our set up positions. Altogether there were over a dozen sniping teams equipped with a .50BMG or .338 Lapua. All the spotters had top of the line .308 rifles, most with the good 1:10 barrels. Navajo had provided the snipers with Raptor night scopes, 4X on the .308s and 6X on the sniping weapon. The vast majority of day scopes were high magnification variable power scopes, ours being all Night Force. Clyde had opened his class three doors and supplied suppressors for any of the snipers that lacked one.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear here, a suppressor suppresses the sound, it doesn't eliminate it. If you want to eliminate the sound, get a Hush Puppy mounted on a M1911. It will be almost totally silent, for a few rounds. You still remember that standard .45 ball ammo is subsonic, right? The reason the Hush Puppy is so silent also explains why it isn't silent for long...rubber washers for baffles. Anyway, enough with the explanations, back to the action.

"I have a party of four about 800 meters out, about 5 degrees left of my direct view, Barry. Can you see them?"

"Ok, Carolyn, got them, about 30 degrees to the right of my direct view. AR-15s or M-16s, right?"

“Right. It must be a recon party.”

“They should have done that before the whole group showed up.”

“What do we want to do? They have to be fully alert so it would be hard to take them out other than by sniping.”

“Clyde?”

“A couple of these spec ops guys think they can take them out using suppressed .45s. They’re using wet cans.”

“Sure won’t be pfutt-pfutt. It’s your idea and you’re the boss, do what’s best.”

“Rog, they’re moving out. Standby.”

From our vantage point, at least half of the sniping team, arrayed in a circular pattern, could see the recon team. We could also see the two spec ops guys, but their camouflage was 50 times better than what the recon team had. Woodland patterned BDUs wouldn’t be my choice for most of the Tucson area. Based on an article on Frugal’s when it was still up, we’d experimented with various patterns of desert camouflage until we had what worked best in this area. Aaron Byrd aka Grand58742 had done a pictorial testing camouflage patterns in the woods in Germany. The Woodland BDUs worked great there. Post Iraqi Freedom, there were tons of desert camouflage available cheap, both new and used.

“Standby, give them two more minutes.”

Shortly thereafter we heard pfutt-pfutt, pfutt-pfutt, pfutt-pfutt, pfutt-pfutt, the two spec ops guys using the USP Tactical’s with the Knight’s armament wet cans. The double taps came in pairs with both men firing at the same time. It couldn’t have taken more than 4 seconds to put the four infiltrators down. The suppressors were pushing a 38db reduction, and the pops weren’t all that loud. The problem now was how the main force would react when the recon team didn’t return. They obviously, at least to me, had to send out a second team but it would most likely be somewhere between 2 squads and a platoon in strength aka a reconnaissance in force. Reconnaissance in force (RIF) is a type of military operation used specifically to probe an enemy's disposition. By mounting an offensive with considerable (but not decisive) force, the commander hopes to elicit a strong reaction by the enemy that reveals its own strength, deployment, and other tactical data. A Reconnaissance by fire is a tactic which applies a similar principle. When not trying to be stealthy, reconnaissance units may fire on likely enemy positions to provoke a reaction.

“Barry, my guys think they’ll recon in force next.”

“I would, Clyde. It would be best if we keep the noise down.”

“Why not bring in some of the heavies? A pair of fifties and a pair of Mk-19s.”

“It would be heard by the main force; that might be better. They might think twice before to go up against that kind of firepower; depending on what they have for heavy firepower.”

“I’ll have the heavies brought up and we’ll decide what’s best when the time arrives. Odd number teams and squads take a 30 minute break and if we have time, even numbered teams and squads follow them.”

Our positions were about 2,000 meters in front of their camp. In the event that they mounted a direct attack immediately, we’d need the heavies and some of the stuff based even further back. When it came, the force consisted of 3 fire teams. This time they had a M249 and a grenadier plus a dedicated marksman with what appeared to be an M-21.

We spent ~30 minutes eating, using the latrine and drinking some coffee. Then, the even numbered teams completed the same process. The breaks were split up so we never had less than half of our forces out of position at any given time. The work schedule was 12 on/12 off. Off duty, we were ~ 30 minutes from our designated positions.

The decision was made to let them get as close as possible and spring an ambush with the heavies only being used as a last resort. The 1½ squad team came in 20 minutes later indicating concern over the first team. They had portable CBs and apparently missed one or two check-ins. We waited until they were about 400 meters out and opened up. They all went down and the large group knew our approximate position. They assembled and began to move up.

We opened up with the MK-19s and the .50s when they’d covered half the distance. Our off duty people were called up the moment the group was spotted. There was no way they arrive before the battle was engaged. As expected their Bradley CFV led the way followed by their armed HMMWVs and two LAV-25s covering the flanks. We used the Hellfire missiles on our LAV-25s and Bradley. After using the Mk19 with limited success against the uparmored HMMWVs, we used two TOWs and two Javelins.

With their armor capacity gone, half continued to fight and the remainder fled. Our out teams were radioed and sent after those fleeing. We used our greatest asset, the concealment and cover to optimal advantage. Over the course of the next 30 minutes, the return fire diminished and stopped. Several of the members of the local militias checked the temporary survivors and helped them recover instantly from their pain.

The out teams were longer in reporting, mission complete with no survivors. We didn’t assist in the slaughter of the living opponents. We were lucky, all things considered, and none of our family members experienced anything other than sand in the eyes from near misses.



“I’d say that went all right.”

“I can’t agree. Executing the wounded goes against everything I was taught.”

“You would have us use up our limited medical supplies treating a bunch of outlaws that attacked us?”

“Not that either. I suppose I would agree of stripping them of anything useable and just leaving them lay.”

“That’s cruel compared to what happened. At least they didn’t suffer and we have no shortage of ammunition. Plus, some of their weapons were as good as or better than what some of the militias had.”

“I’m going to suggest initiating a mounted patrol, with that Santayana quote in mind. Another thing we need to do is start growing field crops for livestock feed. If we can locate a large ranch with irrigation in place, we’ll be about to feed most of Tucson. We’ll need wheat, corn, oats and soybeans plus a very, very large garden. It’s either that or finding ourselves in the position where the locals are going to want what food we can produce. Labor shouldn’t be a problem. We can collect all of the available Mason jars and lids plus all the available pressure canners. There’s room in Clyde’s warehouse to add more propane countertops.”

“That will be a good winter project.”

“Bill’s birthday is January 1<sup>st</sup> and he’ll be 6. I have a Walker that would be perfect for him. I think I’ll start his firearms training on the Marlin 39A. I think we should wait a year before we go to the SR-556. It will be 2 more years for Sara and Margo.”

“Do you have horses for them?”

“As a matter fact, yes. Two more two year old Walker geldings. We’re lucky on that, we’re getting far more fillies than colts. We may even need to get more land for pasture.”

“The place next to us is empty. It was the rest of the quarter section that our parcel came from.”

“Who owns that?”

“The people who owned it died during the strike and none of their kids have shown up to claim it. I don’t know whether they’re alive or not. Why not take out the fence and seed all of the land for pasture?”

“It has a barn and silo and we could probably put a hired man in the house to care for the horses. Hans has turned out to be an excellent farrier. He doesn’t have much time to do more than that but their boy could feed the horses and muck the stalls. What do you think, five dollars a week?”

“Two hundred a week in old money for a teenager to tend to a small herd? I’ll ask Daddy to talk with Hans and see what Hans thinks it would be worth in old dollars and we can go from there.”

“Ok. Just how big is the families’ herd?”

“We have as many as the rest combined. Count ours if you need to know. Say, I just had a thought about the gold and silver coins. We have \$6,000 old dollars’ worth of 90% silver coins. That represents 4,332 ounces of pure silver. We could have the coins melted down and the silver extracted. The silver could be minted into .999 fine dimes quarters and halves, creating coinage for things of lesser value.

“We had an American history class and the professor went on and on about the history of US currency. JFK was the last president with intentions of restoring the silver standard. Later during the Reagan years, the public was finally allowed to own gold bullion. It can’t be that hard to extract the silver from those coins and the increase in value we’d realize would cover the cost of extraction and minting. If the entire family did it, we could put at least 8,664 ounces of silver into circulation.”

“Does your Daddy have any other silver holdings in his vault?”

“I don’t really know. He might, it wouldn’t really surprise me. Those 1,000 troy ounce bars were available and he liked to hedge with precious metals. We could even use something like the design of those Kitco private issue coins as a pattern.”

“What do you think, Daddy?”

“I like it. I didn’t say anything to anyone except your mother, but when the economy looked like it might collapse I began cashing out most of my poorer investments and buying silver ingots. I’m not sure how many of those 1,000 ounce ingots I have in the vault without checking my spreadsheet. We have quite a few because when the price of metals started rising, I bought all we had money for at the time.

“The stock market fell off drastically and I was forced to go into a hold mode. Once it turned around, I liquidated everything but my blue chips. Blue chips in my estimation, not according to traditional definitions. Gold and silver prices began to skyrocket and I put it all into silver for a while because the ratio at the time was about 75 to 1. I was gambling that it would return to the historical ratio of 50 to 1. As it happens, I know someone who can refine the coins to produce .999 fine silver and he’s in cahoots with a guy who can mint coins. We’d just have to settle on a design. Why not an outline map of

the US on the reverse and the weight and purity on the front? Say one tenth ounce .999 fine silver and so forth.”

“But Clyde, it wouldn’t be legal coinage.”

“Would you rather have a coin with a known value or something like a zinc penny?”

“We will bring all \$6,000 face value uncirculated silver coins over here and you can get the ball rolling Daddy.”

“You two already started the ball rolling with the deal on that Barb gelding. I want to bring up something else. Do either of you realize just how lucky we were when we went up against that gang? I know we had long range rifles and body armor, but they had mortars and big guns in the beginning. If there was one group out there, I believe there must be more. We prevailed in this case because they were stupid. Not all of our opponents in the future will, of necessity, be stupid. They could simply be desperate.”

“I brought up starting mounted patrol around Tucson. What do you think?”

“You might not be as dumb as you look.”

“Hey, don’t talk like that about my husband!”

“Ok, sorry; it was just a joke. Altogether, they’ve managed to round up about 400 surviving horses and they’ve started a breeding program. With what people did with their vehicles because they wouldn’t listen to good, sound advice when it was offered, there aren’t going to be many motor vehicles available. While we have a good supply of fuel, oils and lubricants, it’s not unlimited. There’s seed stored to produce canola and I have that small biodiesel processing plant. We’ll have fuels, but what about oils and lubricants?”

“Mobile One and Castrol both make synthetic oil. If some chemist can develop synthetic oils, some other chemist should be able to develop synthetic lubricants if they haven’t been developed already.”

“You’re right, and it’s been done already. All of those silicone lubricants are synthetic. All we have to do is find a manufacturing facility and restore it to use. I’m going to call it a day. I don’t believe we can save humanity in a single day.”

“We’d better get home too; I’ve got a few things I need to do. Carolyn, are you ready?”

You know, maybe Clyde was right about saving humanity. It was strange how my attitudes had changed since I’d married into a family actually capable helping, in a small way, that very thing. Money can’t buy happiness...properly used, it can go a long way towards making others happy, and healthy. Clyde sort of fell into the nouveau riche category, once removed, aka parvenu riche.

On the way home we decided, as a certainty, to give Bill a rifle and horse for his sixth birthday. We further agreed to do the same for Sara and Margo on their sixth birthdays. We would provide the necessary training, as time permitted with both assuming the role of instructor, starting with gun safety training. We could use Carolyn's Golden Trigger to demonstrate weapons cleaning and disassembly. We could maintain the upper hand throughout by denying riding time or access to the .22. But January 1<sup>st</sup> was 11 weeks in the future, plenty of time to reconsider the question of teaching Bill to shoot and giving him his first firearm.

With a name like Barry, I hadn't been subjected to a continuing process of name and/or nickname changes. Our son started with William, was Billy Boy for a very short period then moved to Billy and finally Bill. The only one of the four he wouldn't answer to was Billy Boy. Clyde slipped once and his grandson made it perfectly clear which names he'd answer to and the one he wouldn't. Our son was growing up in a world gone mad.

By the beginning of the fourth year, coinciding with his birthday he only answered to Bill unless he was being severely scolded. We were well supplied with jeans for our son and both daughters. I would say it was the uniform of the day; however, jeans are made from a durable fabric, denim, and we even wore them to the church services available on irregular basis. Clothing was on everyone's salvage list and between what we had put up for the eventuality that came to pass and the amount salvaged, the family was well supplied.

Robert and Johnny's children were older and reaching the end of their adolescent growth making them easier to fit. 'Cowboy' boots were the most common footwear for ranchers so we had a good supply in every size. One might not get a color or style they wanted, but they did get replacement boots. The surviving cobblers were kept busy replacing leather soles and heels; leather being readily available opposed to 'rubber' heels and soles.

The roving patrols were organized by the Tucson Police Department and the Pima County Sheriff's office. Two person teams were dispatched in three hour intervals 24/7. They were equipped with portable radios and an interesting assortment of armaments. Each had a pistol and a semiauto rifle plus a semiauto or pump shotgun. Most carried a backup pistol and about half also carried a lever action rifle and single action revolver. The rifle-revolver combinations included .357 and .44 magnums, .45 Colts and .44-40s. Use of 9mm handguns was discouraged but not prohibited so long as the ammo was +P JHP. The .45ACP caliber was preferred because of the large supply of that caliber ammo and the limited amount of +P JHP 9mm ammo. A few had intended to carry their .40SW, but limited ammo forced them use keep them at home as personal defense weapons.

Most of the shotguns were equipped with side saddles and elastic buttstock shell holders. A small portion also had speed stocks. After exhausting the local supply of bandoleers for the shotgun shells, the demands were met with a few cottage industries that

sprang up. After the local supply of the various smokeless powder was exhausted, Clyde shared a portion of what he had in his armory. Any weapon originally designed for black powder was loaded with each black powder substitutes like Pyrodex or locally manufactured black powder. That was only really important for the non-military calibers in view of the quantity of ammunition recovered from the Fort and the Camp.

## Silence is Golden – Chapter 10

The supplies of M1022 and Mk211 were shared with the other locals with .50 caliber rifles. Most of the .338 Lapua had to be reloaded due to limited quantities. Since it was mostly sniper ammo, it was loaded to match specifications and tuned to each rifle. The patrols proved their worth of the following summer. Another gang, equipped equally as the first but fewer in numbers, had their scouts discovered by one of the teams. With spring planting coming on, we took the battle to them rather than waiting.

This group included women and children and the attack was put on hold. After a long discussion, the community leaders decided to approach the group rather than ambushing them. Most of the men and some of the women were wearing ACUs, ABUs and Marpat. They indeed proved to be an assemblage of military personnel and quickly volunteered to act as yet another militia unit if there was a way they could barter for food and other supplies.

They were offered an abandoned ranch with operable equipment, seeds and a supply of petroleum, oils and lubricants (pols) plus a small amount of initial supplies. In response, the leader (a senior NCO) was generous with his thanks. He stated that they were only a portion of their total group and the remainder was still at MCLB Barstow.

The group consisted of Airmen from Edwards AFB, Soldiers from Fort Irwin's OPFOR and Marines from Barstow, 29 Palms and Yuma. The group included spouses and children and numbered closer to 600 in total. Those not present were spread out at the locations with military equipment and supplies that they intended to preserve at all costs. They had picked up a few radio transmissions from the Tucson area and the family men and women headed our way to check us out. The families were brought, specifically, to make them appear less threatening. The CSM wanted to talk to the guy in charge, someone named Clyde.

"I'm Clyde, Sergeant Major. You have it wrong, I'm not in charge of anything, except being the head of my family."

"That's not the impression we got."

"My family has been at this survivalist/prepper business since just before the Cuban Missile Crisis and we're fairly well prepared. My son-in-law is the only one of us with direct military experience. He was Army Infantry, E-5, MOS 11B. Did a tour in the sandbox. The family has a little money and has some equipment. We helped organize local salvage efforts and are a major horse breeder, post war slash impact."

"Are those military HMMWVs I see?"

"Negative. They're 2006 H1 Alpha Hummers with a few modifications. I had them on blocks, for the most part, waiting for the day. My son-in-law's replacement vehicle was a low mileage vehicle of the same vintage with similar modifications."

“Replacement vehicle?”

“His fancy pickup was totaled in a head on collision. I acquired the H1 and had it brought up to my specs while he was in the coma and hospital recovering. You’ll forgive me if I don’t say more about that.”

“Loose lips sink ships?”

“We sort of go with Silence is Golden since my daughter got married.”

“Same difference. Can we see the ranch?”

“Our security people will show you the way.”

“Private security?”

“Hungry ex-Spec Ops. We have a little of every group, SEALs, Force Recon, Special Forces, PJs, Rangers and so on. Tried to hire the best.”

“Heard you had a little trouble down this way.”

“Wasn’t any trouble, they lost.”

“You have heavy firepower?”

“Picked up a little. They had a Bradley CFV, a couple of LAV-25s and some up armored HMMWVs. We have TOWs, Hellfire’s, Javelins, Mk-19s and...”

“Ma Deuces, old reliable. You people responsible for cleaning out Navajo?”

“Yeah, what do you need?”

“Just asking. So how many people in the area?”

“Give or take? One hundred thousand. Something on the order of two dozen militia organizations. Plus we have the mounted patrols operated by the Police Department and Pima County Sheriff.”

“I wondered how you spotted us.”

“Two person roving patrol called it in. We thought about just attacking but the women and children gave us pause for thought. That brings you up to date; now what?”

“The ranch tour?”

“Working on it. No officers?”

“We left them where they were; Non Coms run the military anyway.”

“Good guys or pain in the butts?”

“Mostly the former. Got a couple of jarhead Lieutenants I don’t much care for but they’re coming around. It’s not service specific. There’s this Lieutenant Junior Grade and a couple of Army butter bars that have their heads stuck. Most of them get unstuck by the time they make O-3. Highest rank is an O-5, Navy Commander.”

“I’m getting the nod that our head of security is ready to take a select group on that tour.”

“Select group?”

“Figured the women and children might like to eat and bathe.”

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Militia units are made up of people who serve as part time citizen soldiers. Oft times they include veterans who provide the leadership and training. Overall, they lack the training found in professional military units. When Clyde filled us in on the additional Battalion of trained and equipped military personnel we were cautiously enthusiastic. Carolyn and I were now using a full quarter section giving the family a total of 280 acres. No significant portion of the land was dedicated to growing crops; we needed the pasture too much. Other ranches and farms produced the livestock feed and canola. The canola was being used for vegetable oil by the local residents.

Clyde oversaw consolidations of our herds, all at our place and the other 120 acres, minus homesteads, was used to grow hay. With a yield of 3-4 cuttings depending on the temperatures and sunlight, we had an abundance of small bale hay. We kept the lofts full and stacked the excess under open covers.

If there were any unused nuclear weapons anywhere around the planet, which was doubtful, either no one knew where they were or knew how to use them. Our other nemesis, Nature wasn’t so forgiving. The amount of ash in the air had led to glaciation above 50°N and it progressed slowly south. The southern hemisphere had similar problems except the demarcation line was 50°S progressing northward.

One would have thought with the absence of significant numbers of motor vehicles, greenhouse gases wouldn’t have been a problem. However, rail lines had been repaired and low sulfur coal was the principal fuel used to generate power. With Palo Verde down, we were getting a substantial share of our electrical power from the coal fired plant at Holbrook. Restoration of power had been a difficult task requiring the replace-



ment of lines, transformers and acquisition of the necessary coal. We had only begun receiving power in the period between the battle and the arrival of the new group.

“That’s a relief. Do we have the parts to rebuild the generators for the next time they’re needed?”

“Watch it honey, don’t say things like ‘the next time’.”

“Barry, with a sole source of power being located that far away, we’re bound to have outages. I wasn’t suggesting needing generator power on a regular basis. Besides, the solar and wind power provides a major portion of our electricity now that the skies have cleared. Robert found a new source for batteries and they were stored dry with the electrolyte stored separately. He’s looking for a source for more solar panels so we can complete the arrays on our barns.”

“Where is he looking?”

“New Mexico. Schott has or had a factory there. It’s iffy because Albuquerque was probably hit. He said they weren’t making the 315 watt panels there, only the 230 watt.”

“If he can find working panels, it’s not like were short of south facing roof space.”

“I forgot to tell you, Mom brought over our new silver coins. They’re equally divided by weight,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the weight in each denomination. We have 2,888 halves, 5,776 quarters and 14,440 dimes. It took a bit to unload the coins since there are about 99 pounds of each denomination. Unfortunately, they’re packed loose in bags.”

“Under the revaluation, a dime will buy what used to cost \$4, right?”

“Gee, you remembered.”

I responded to her remark by tickling her which led to a bit more serious touchy-feely.

“Stop that. The kids are all up and supper is on the stove. Feel free to bring it up later.”

“Bring what up?”

“Whatever.”

The next morning over breakfast, Carolyn hit me with a totally unexpected question.

“I have a couple of questions about the firearms you had when we met.”

“Ask.”

“Since the Springfield Armory M1A is inherently more accurate than the FAL, why did you have a FAL instead of a M1A?”

“Money. Had I an abundance of money, I probably would have purchased a Super Match. The FAL was about  $\frac{2}{3}$  the price of the loaded model and  $\frac{1}{4}$  the price of the Super Match. It was the same way with my handgun. The Taurus was a real bargain for a 1911 but only held 8 rounds in the magazine and had fixed sights. The Glock was about the same price with a higher capacity magazine and adjustable sights. The tipping point was the built in safety features of the Glock.

“Plus I could use the magazines from the 21 in the 30 when Clyde bought me one. The Mossberg was the Marine Corps shotgun before they went to the Benelli. I liked it because it had the metal safety and trigger guard, the ghost rings sights and the magazine extension NIB.”

“You didn’t overreact to the model 30 and you only seemed to be a little upset about the Super Match. Why the reaction to the Tac-50?”

“By then, I was beginning to feel as if I wasn’t the principal support of our family.”

“Just curious.”

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If I recall correctly the old expression was, “Dear John,’ that’s all she wrote.”

Something my father attributed to my grandfather who was a member of the Greatest Generation and fought on some of those Pacific islands. That war was the beginning...we developed the nukes to end it. They were only used in one more war, the one that ended the use of nukes (I hope). We haven’t had to resort to fighting with sticks and stones, yet. Hopefully it will never come to that. He said, “I do not know with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.”

We used the nukes in the third and will probably use rifles in the fourth. The survivors of that may, indeed, be using stick and stones, but I wouldn’t put any money on it.

Afterword:

The stated ‘legal’ values of the gold and silver Eagles are as represented. The actual ratio between gold and silver as of market close on 2/26/10 was 67.79 ounces of silver per ounce of gold. Gold and silver have no more intrinsic worth than a dollar bill or a euro. As stated, there is just something about having metal in hand, partly due to its rarity. As long as there has been currency, precious, ergo rare, metals were involved. Currency is first, last and always a medium of exchange. It’s much easier to carry a small gold coin or two than a wagon load of grain.

Some would argue that other things, ammo perhaps, would be a medium of exchange. Possibly, but it's far easier to use up ammo than gold Eagles. Some fired brass can be easily reloaded but most of the foreign ammo is Berdan primed and if you are able to reload it, the number of times is very limited. Berdan primers were adopted for the very reason that they are difficult to reload. The enemy insurgents couldn't reload Berdan as easily as Boxer primers.

No one, regardless of their monetary wealth, can be totally prepared for everything that could happen. Even were you rich and heavily invested in preparations, an off course warhead could make it meaningless. Or, Clarence's rock might sneak from behind the sun and turn your backyard into the Barringer Meteor Crater. Planet Earth has endured five extinction level events (ELE). There is no reason to believe it won't experience more.

I'm leaning more to TEOCAWKI as opposed to TEOTWAWKI. As far as something like the stuff hitting the fan, it seems like that happens daily, somewhere. Read the news with a jaundiced eye and it's easy to see. This year, we had Haiti and it's early in the year. Blizzards seem to be a popular topic of discussion in the media. They will be followed by floods and then tornados and hurricanes.

Buy the Tac-50, it's a tack driver.

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